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XII

ETCHINGS

CLÉMENT DE JONGHE

REMBRANDT

ETCHINGS

BY

FREDERICK WEDMORE

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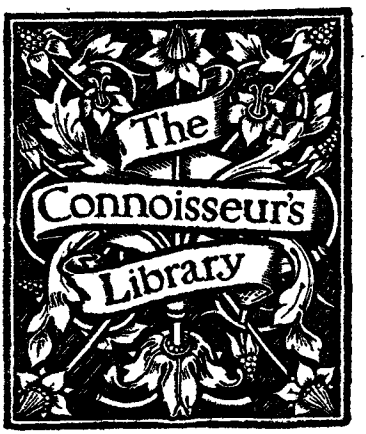

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PREFACE

ALTHOUGH I hope that there is little in this book that may not be in great measure apprehended by those who open it without previous knowledge of its theme, it seemed to me, as I prepared to write it, that it would be quite inappropriate to choose as starting-point the point that would have been fitting and necessary in England thirty or forty years ago. People do not now speak of little pen-and-ink drawings as "Etchings." The world that cares for Art at all has become strangely and creditably occupied with original Prints.

That fact—extremely agreeable to me, personally—and the existence of so many disquisitions on technique and on the principles of Etching, permits, almost imposes on one, now, a certain brevity of speech as to mere methods; as to what constitutes good Etching in the abstract; as to what subjects and what moods this particular Art favours. Therefore, instead of putting into the forefront of my volume any account in detail of what Etching is, and the rest, I have left all that to the thirtieth, the last, chapter—which it is open to any one to turn to first, if he please. Careful that it should not contain mis-statements as to things which it is not my business to know

intimately, I submitted this chapter, in manuscript, to my friend Sir Frank Short. I did this not because he is now a Member of a Royal Academy which has not done too much for Original Engraving, nor because he is the President of the Royal Society of Painter-Etchers, but because, as well as being a fine Etcher, he is the master craftsman: the man who has the secrets of the *métier* at his fingers' ends. I am sure he must have considered that thirtieth chapter inadequate; but he is nice enough to say that it has no mis-statements.

What then has my own business, as I conceive it, been, throughout the bulk of this volume? It has been to make my narration—historical and biographical, critical and descriptive—preserve, as far as one mind can preserve, a just balance, a sense of proportion: not to exalt the old at the expense of the novel, or the novel at the expense of the old, or the celebrity at the cost of the man of genius who has not reached fame. A hundred Etchers, perhaps, may be named here; and I suppose about half of them—personalities of mark—are studied pretty closely. It is personalities that are interesting. And therefore—never a great believer in the dominating influence of School, period, or nationality, in Art, whose value and whose charm lies in individual gift and individual utterance—I have asked myself what was the contribution of each personality to the common stock, and on that contribution my attention has been concentrated.

A supplementary word, as to the Illustrations. Here the aim has been to get such an assemblage as would

discover, alike to the student and the beginner, almost at a glance, the range and the variety of fine achievement of which, in subject and in method, Etching is capable. What is called "Etching" is very often a mixed process. Some of the plates reproduced are in pure Etching; others are mixtures; in several cases, there is Dry-point alone; and in one, Aquatint alone.

F. W.

September, 1911

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" C'est n'estimer personne, qu'estimer tout le monde "

ETCHINGS

CHAPTER I

REMBRANDT

IT is recognized by many generations, and by two continents, that the master-etcher is Rembrandt. The judgment first tacitly pronounced in the more prosperous of the years of his own lifetime has been gradually, and one may say unanimously confirmed; and should it ever be reversed, save through the apparition of some inconceivable genius, we shall have fallen (as indeed we may fall, for our idols in the Arts have not invariably been true gods)—we shall have fallen, I must declare, upon an epoch of false taste and scanty insight.

Of course that sort of comparison which consists in the effort to assign to artists their particular place in an order of merit is, oftener than not, futile: it is the sort of comparison which alone may be reckoned "odious." The permissible, the fruitful comparison is, as a rule, the sort which finds likenesses and differences—traces an influence at one time dominant: takes note of a point gained, a craftsmanship developing, a mannerism acquired, an aim deteriorating or getting higher. But, once in a while, there are circumstances which warrant us, not only in appraising merits and defects, but in proceeding to a choice—in calling some one, definitely, to the exalted place.

ETCHINGS

It is difficult to conceive of a period when, in dealing with Etching, there could be any reason to think that we should be wrong in naming as the representative etcher—deepest in feeling, widest in mind, most variously accomplished in craftsmanship—Rembrandt, upon whom our election still happily lights.

Even in the most superficial survey, Rembrandt's credentials convince and overpower. This man had everything that makes for quite exceptional eminence. He had the foundation of great Art in a life of vicissitude, for in an unwonted degree there fell to him failure, success, intensity of happiness, intensity of trouble. Out of his "great sorrows" he made, not "little songs," but noble pictures. He had a prodigious staying power. He brought a method and a treatment absolutely his own to each order of subject with which he was pleased to be concerned. His vision of Landscape and of Character was alike penetrating. His performance was fearless, and it was new. He influenced many, and he was himself dominated by no one. All that is the record of an artist whose place is the first.

And Rembrandt, while he was almost a debutant, was already a master. What was his age, and how many or how few had been his other performances, when he made an etching which on its own lines remains unsurpassed: that "Head of a Woman, lightly etched," in which is recognized his earliest portrait of his mother? He was twenty-one when he did it—in 1628—and before it he had wrought perhaps three or four plates. The little piece will always be amongst the treasures of the serious student—so flexible and light of hand has Rembrandt shown himself in it, and as an observer of character how faultless and profound! Not one of the several portraits of his mother that this artist made can suggest to us

that in her was any trace of the commonplace; but, for all that, this one is exceptional, Rembrandt having here found in or bestowed upon her personality an air *grande dame*—Nature's *grande dame* of course I mean, but with a hint also of the world's. She has good looks, in her late years. She has a little reasonable vanity, or pleasure in pleasing; she has a smile of gentle comedy; she has immense sagacity; she is a woman with whose experience and whose wisdom we should desire, eagerly, to get acquainted. And, though discreet, she is decidedly communicative.

Anticipating things a little, let it be said now, that of Rembrandt's etched portraits of women there is but one other that is quite the equal of this one. That is "La Mère de Rembrandt au voile noir," of which the date—assumed in this case, not positively known—is 1631. In this print, the mother sits erect in her arm-chair, dignified, reticent, a thin-lipped mouth closed firmly, not to say hardly; few are there for whom this elderly woman, confident and reflective, would not be a match. Really it would be hard to choose between these two most perfect portraits—these two illuminating visions. The first has the social charm; the second, the grave bourgeois character, *enfermé, retenu.*

With occasional and necessary diversions, perhaps, but in the main with much regard to order of production, we will continue the study of the master. That is the more instructive and the more interesting, and, *pace* many compilers of Catalogues, the more logical and reasonable way. The old division of the great work, an *œuvre* of something like Three Hundred plates, into groups according to subject, must gradually, in practice—whatever books may do—yield to the newer and more natural one: a division with reference to period; or, indeed, no division

at all, but simply a progress. By that method too, the growth of the man's mind, the change in his interests, is apprehended the more readily. The study of the work blends better so with the study of life's outward adventures and the adventures of the soul.

In the second of the years that passed between the production of the two portraits of his mother that have been dwelt upon above, the artist was quite exceptionally occupied with the production of etched portraits of himself. They are of all moods, and they pass from fancy to realism, and from stagy pomp to intimacy. "Rembrandt with Haggard Eyes"—a candid sketch, wrought after a night of dissipation or labour (he may have the benefit of the doubt)—is perhaps the most expressive of them; and to which order that belongs it is not necessary to reveal. Not to this period, it must be remembered, but to some sixteen years later, belongs the finest portrait of himself, the "Rembrandt drawing." He was then in full middle age. Yet, though no etched portrait which may follow that is at all as serious and convincing, we need not forget that in his painted work, the artist's noblest "self-portraits" were of later date than any etched one. As years went on, up to the very end, Rembrandt the sitter became as a model more and more interesting, and Rembrandt the painter became as an artist not only more and more dexterous and accomplished, but also more and more august and profound.

Three years, it would appear, after his portrayal of his mother in austere mood—a piece in which there is placed before us with unsurpassable power some characteristics of old age, in very partial physical failure, and in extreme mental alertness and decision, not to say obstinacy—Rembrandt addressed himself, with a joy we can readily enter into, to the record, just possibly a little

LA MÈRE DE REMBRANDT AU VOILE NOIR

REMBRANDT

ennobled, of the splendid youth of Saskia, his wife, the so-called "Jewish Bride." The background of her serene face is her long and widespread hair—

> Hair such a wonder of flix and floss,
> Freshness and fragrance: floods of it, too.

That year, 1634, is noteworthy besides for the production of one of the sacred subjects which most will hold its own—I mean "The Supper at Emmaus": a piece of finest feeling, searching truth, and withal of a dignity so apparent that it is not fanciful to say that while much in it is Rembrandt only, and Rembrandt at his best, something is in it too that suggests a conception of the Renaissance, a memory of that which was most noble and mature—most expressive, most simplified—in the art of Italy.

Two years later than the "Jewish Bride"—of which, as I long ago insisted, with Seymour Haden's promptly published approval, the First State, with no disconcerting accessory, alone properly presents the thought of the master—there appeared another, a simpler—shall we say a more homely?—but what a delightful record of Saskia, youthful and intact! That occurs in one of the most desirable of all the plates of sketches—"Rembrandt's Wife and Five Other Heads." Three years afterwards, we arrive at an etched portrait of himself which is of extraordinary grace and meditative charm: the complement, in a sense, of the later "Rembrandt Drawing"; it is the "Rembrandt leaning on a Stone Sill." In that same year came—like a portent, one might say—the piece called "Youth surprised by Death," of which the conception takes us in thought to Dürer. Three years pass, and in 1642, in a very small plate which is of the utmost pathos and simplicity, Rembrandt records, as students often of

views widely separated have agreed to admit, the death of Saskia, still young—or, rather, her mortal illness. "Rembrandt's Wife Dying" is the name given it by Middleton-Wake; "The Dying Saskia," the name given it by Haden.

Before her death occurred, and in no way, that I can see, associated with it, as some have imagined, Rembrandt had taken to Landscape Etching. The year 1641 saw two of the very finest of his landscapes in the early-middle manner: two pieces "pushed," as the French have it, farther, no doubt, than he would have "pushed" them at a later time—farther than he would have pushed them but seven years later, when, with the "Landscape with a Ruined Tower and a Clear Foreground," with its pronounced economy of learned means, its high concern, not with details at all, but with masses and weather, we are in presence of the triumphant blossoming of Modern Landscape Art.

But though "Rembrandt's Mill" and the "Cottage with Dutch Haybarn"—this second with its tender reflections of foliage in still water, and its silhouette of Amsterdam with its roofs and its remote towers—have not the immediate and visible decisiveness, the incontestable unity, the almost spiritual impressiveness of the "Landscape with a Ruined Tower," and, behind the "clear foreground," the impending storm, they are, and must be accepted for all Time, as masterpieces of their day and method. The "View of Omval" and, in its almost fragmentary way, the very slight sketch "Six's Bridge," which has the paucity of line of a typical Jongkind, but not a Jongkind's significance, lead us on but gradually to the ripest period, when "The Orchard with a Barn" and "Landscape with a Ruined Tower" appeared, and were followed at no long interval—for it was in 1650

THE LANDSCAPE WITH THE RUINED TOWER

REMBRANDT

—by "A Village with a Square Tower," and as Mr. Middleton-Wake at least believes, and I have no reason to doubt, by that very desirable instance of the later method, the "Landscape with an Obelisk"—a piece which is not seen properly unless it is seen rich in dry-point. Twelve months more, and the series of landscapes—most of them of the Plain, with its vast, empty skies—culminates in "The Goldweigher's Field." And, as I have compared the "Six's Bridge" with a Jongkind —not wholly to its advantage—I will compare, and for as good a reason, "The Goldweigher's Field" with a Legros. The Goldweigher's Field is not a field, but an estate. This is a bird's-eye view of Uytenbogaert's property. I only know one other bird's-eye view that vies with it in attractiveness or in happy suggestiveness—and they are here the same thing—and that is a piece due, as has been implied, to Legros: it is an example of *his* later art; and what is lying out before us in it, as we survey the scene from a modest upland, is a wide valley and long, rolling hill-side, stretched, all of it, under the boon of Summer, under "le bon soleil de Bourgogne."

The years that we have reached, though not in Etchings perhaps the most prolific, were actually, for their etched work—its quality and its importance—the most notable. There had already, and but lately, been the "Hundred Guilder"—that tender realization of Christ's ministry to the sick—and that triumph of technique in Still Life: the shell, the "Damier." The very year that saw "The Goldweigher's Field" saw "Tobit blind," with its unforced and simple pathos and expressiveness; "Dr. Faustus," with its weird fascination; and, to name last the greatest, the portrait "Clément de Jonghe." That is so subtle in its excellence that for a while it seems to have escaped due recognition. Even now it has not quite fully come

into its own: it is still "on the up grade." A piece of sentiment more obvious—"The Younger Haaring"—has sometimes been accounted of surer appeal. Without doubt a noble performance is "The Elder Haaring" of the same period. But, for my own part, I have found the "Clément de Jonghe" possessed of a more lasting magnetism. That middle-aged print-seller holds me with his eye as did the Ancient Mariner the Wedding Guest. He holds me as did Henry Irving. And I am glad to find so judicious, so deeply studious a collector as was the late M. Dutuit, of Rouen, sharing my opinion to the extent of saying, "Je regarde ce portrait comme un des plus beaux: il l'emporte même sur tous les autres, à l'exception du Vieux Haaring, qui seul peut entrer en parallèle." And yet more interesting is it to be assured—as we have been lately assured, on evidence irrefutable, of how Whistler regarded it. He praised not often; but of this, what he said was, "Without flaw: beautiful as a canvas by Tintoret—beyond which there is nothing."

Now the "Clément de Jonghe," although always a creation—always, in any State, more or less a performance of Art—is to be admired far more, and to be sought for and obtained, if possible (though that is counselling an uphill task) in its First State. Little changes, unimportant to mention, but not unimportant to avoid, have caused deterioration in the Second. In the Third—once absurdly represented as the best—it is not so much the introduction of an arched line over the head, as the further work upon the face, sentimentalizing the whole visage, that spoils, once for all, the picture. I should doubt very seriously whether this added work upon the face—that debases subtlety to sentimentality—was ever seen by the master. Here is a feeble dreamer, where was a thinker and a planner, grave and shrewd and keen.

An overrated portrait of the popular kind, albeit we allow it some quiet beauty of its own, a something, Rembrandt's and no other's, that does redeem it from the commonplace, is the "Jan Six," of 1647. The "Burgomaster Six" Rembrandt's friend was not, at that time, though that is how the print is often spoken of. In addition to the agreeable quiet of the pose and scene, this print offers the opportunity for studying an unusual technique, which in effect approaches to the mezzotint. And perhaps the Portraits as a whole do offer more than any class of work does—though it would be difficult to say why—a variety and range of technical method for our instruction and surprise. The amateur who knows them has but to run over, in his mind, the first dozen that may occur to him, to see this may be so. I will not name a dozen in confirmation of my theory or surmise; but take this half-dozen—"Jan Six," the "Woman lightly etched," the "Jewish Bride," the "Rembrandt leaning," the "Ephraim Bonus"—that highly wrought figure of the Jewish doctor, pausing on the staircase—the "Clément de Jonghe," or an exquisite small thing I have not named earlier: the piece in which hasty conjecture once beheld a likeness of Titus, Rembrandt's son, but it is understood now to be the profile of the little Prince of Orange, and what piece is there that is more refined, or, in its presentation of youth, or almost childhood, more engaging or more suave?

The "Jan Six"—to return to it for a moment—although it is one of the sensational attractions, was never a favourite with Seymour Haden: than whom of Rembrandt's work, as of many another's, there has been no more competent and candid judge. Yet at the Abraham Hume Sale, more than thirty years ago, he bought an impression, and at a high price—£350, or thereabouts:

which was high for that time, though for To-day it is insignificant. I remember Sir Seymour flushed and excited over the struggle for it; and how he told me, when it was verily his, that never once before had he coveted any impression of that plate. Since then—and once quite lately—an impression has come into the market which justified the collector's access of desire; but never could it be judicious to possess it at a vast price while there was yet lacking to one the "Clément" or the "Lutma." But the "Lutma" deserves a paragraph to itself.

As the "Clément de Jonghe" is the portrait of a knowing print-seller who had in him something of an artist, so the "Lutma" is the portrait of a goldsmith who was artist and artificer in one. Holding in one hand a figure on which he has been at work, the old man sits low in his high-backed chair—looking out upon us, from under his skull-cap, as at the end of a day's labour—and as near the end of the labour of the long day of Life. Behind him, in all States of the plate except the First State, there is a small-paned window, with high window-sill, and on the window-sill a bottle of water. When that window is added, nothing is lost, and much is gained. It explains and fits in with the illumination of the piece: it is a part, unquestionably, of the design and purpose of Rembrandt in the portrait—its lines help agreeably the composition; and, more than that: until those delicate lines show signs of wear, and the "burr" of the dry-point is apparent no longer, it gives perspective, entourage, reasonable distance, and ambience, we shall say, to the figure. Therefore, as long as it is in a fine impression, that is the State of the Lutma to seek—the Second State, I mean: that which follows immediately upon the introduction of the accessories described. And here, to close this

matter, let the opportunity be taken of saying or repeating what the collector, unless he be an idle, foolish person, should never forget—that in Print-seeing and Print-choosing regard should ever be had, not to the First State necessarily, any more than to the last, but to the best State, whether it be the First, the Second, or, peradventure, the Fifth. There is a reason for preferring the First State of the "Jewish Bride," the First of the "Clément"—I am but giving examples. There is equally a reason for preferring the Second State of the "Lutma."

The last class of subject which Rembrandt took to and tackled in Etching was the Nude figure. As a pryer into every possible theme with which Mankind is in any way concerned, he had allowed himself, with amazing cleverness, two or three indecencies—they were pure indecencies—in 1646. Saskia had then been dead four years; and the connection—at all events the close connection—with Hendrickje Stoffels, the humble, cordial, prepossessing consoler of his age, was not even within sight. We are not obliged to draw inferences. It is not till 1651 that we get the first of the nude women. Most of these ten or so studies would be called horribly "realistic," simply because the models are horribly uncomely. Two or three one can regard with patience—but they are not quite the first—and one or two one can regard with admiration. Let us pass to the latter.

A tall recumbent figure seen from behind, and known often as the "Négresse couchée—though she is, I believe, "négresse" merely by reason of the artist having portrayed her in deepish shadow—is remarkable not only for the fine draughtsmanship, the extremely subtle indication of the pose of the curved form, but also because for once Rembrandt possessed in this woman a model to whom, as far as this single view of her allows us to judge, there was

no exception to be taken. She suggests, and suggests beautifully, unbroken repose, as the only other nude figure to be commented upon—the "Woman with the Arrow"—suggests alertness, activity, a position just assumed and now with promptitude to be changed. It is conceivable that the "Woman with the Arrow" was Hendrickje Stoffels herself—conceivable, but doubtful; for, though short-legged, she has somehow (I think it is the *pose* that does it) more than Hendrickje's elegance, though, also somehow—and it is inexplicable—less than Hendrickje's friendly charm. It was in 1660, or in 1661, that Rembrandt, laying down the etching-needle at the completion of this plate, laid it down never again to take it up.

Mr. Middleton-Wake assigns to Rembrandt Three Hundred and Two Etchings. Wilson, the simple, lucid English cataloguer and tasteful amateur of the year 1836, had assigned to him Three Hundred and Sixty-nine. The lessening of the number is evidence, not of one man's investigations only, but of the spread of the modern critical movement—to speak of England alone, Seymour Haden was long ago minded to take from Rembrandt work of which he was once supposed to have been the author: this plate, not his, was given to Flinck and then to Lievens, and the other to Bol, or perhaps De Koninck. In presence of the most recent doubts as to the attribution of certain other plates—a good many other plates—to the Master, Seymour Haden would seem conservative. Legros's criticism, for instance—spoken rather than written—is infinitely more destructive. I am inclined to think it, and that which resembles it, a good deal *too* destructive. Take away a few more Beggar-subjects, and the right work of elimination would, it seems probable, be almost done.

THE WOMAN WITH THE ARROW

REMBRANDT

It is necessary, of course, in writing about Rembrandt or in studying him, to take count of this matter. But it would be a mistake here to pursue it in detail. Nothing that has been named in this chapter, either for praise or with an accent of modified and relative disapproval, has been doubted at all. We have moved, in this chapter, where we were entitled to move—among accepted pieces. We were entitled because it is very seldom, in the case of *any* master, that the *chefs d'œuvre*, and those that are in line with the *chefs d'œuvre*, and therefore fit in any way to be remotely compared with them, are questioned at all. As a rule, the critic who is busy with doubtful attributions, is busy with the second-rate.

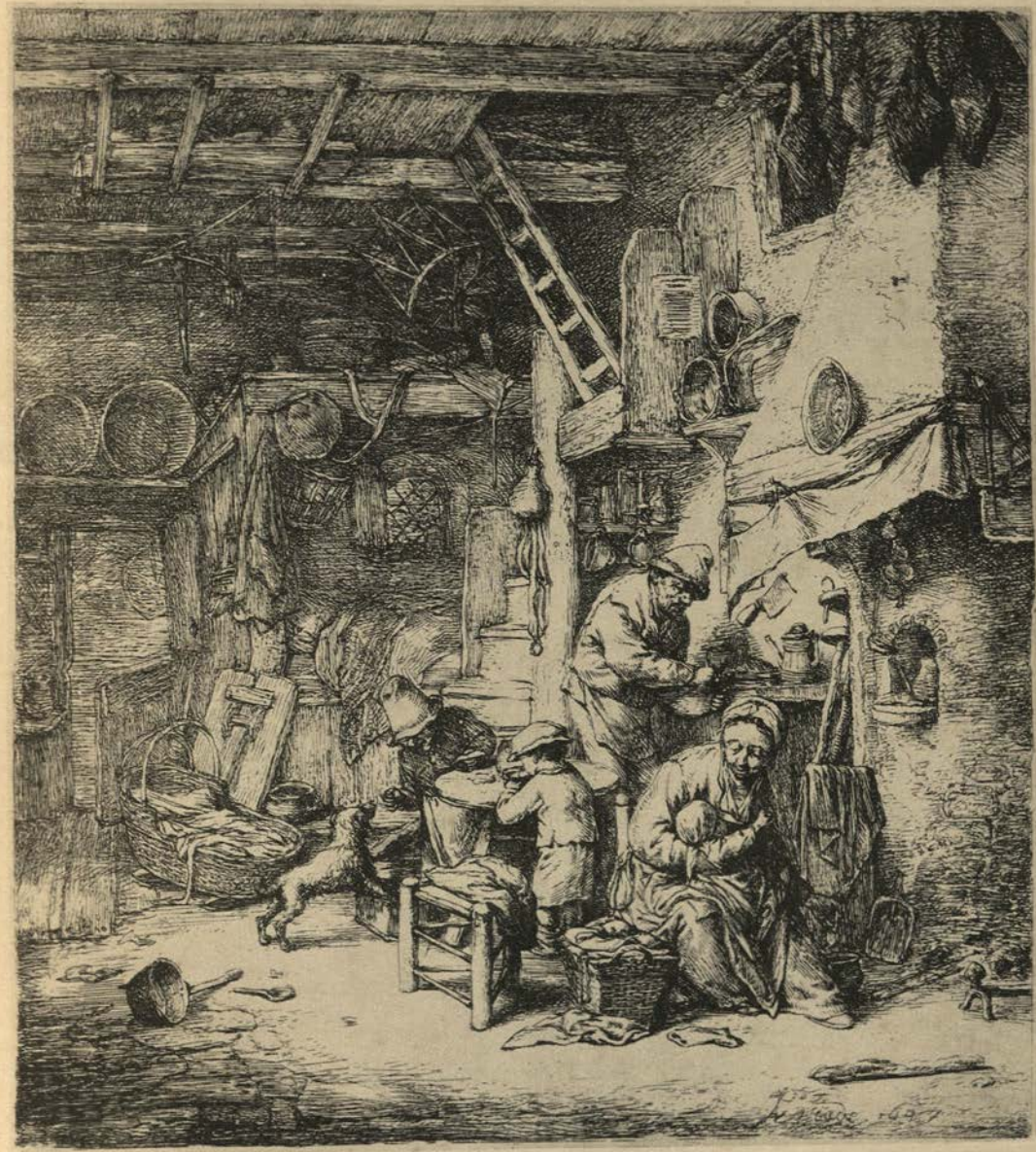
CHAPTER II

REMBRANDT'S DUTCH CONTEMPORARIES

LOOKING at them wholly without regard to the subjects they dealt with, the men who etched in Holland in Rembrandt's time, and for some few years after his death, may be divided first into two classes: the men who worked in complete technical independence of the craft's master, and the men, his pupils or his followers, whose technical methods, perhaps too whose vision of the world, he had inspired.

It was not inevitable, but it was very natural, that of these two classes the first should be the more important. Rembrandt's immediate scholars, not even excepting Ferdinand Bol, had not that attraction of individuality which, whatever other gifts or graces they were wanting in, did certainly belong—as did high technical skill, to boot—to Ostade, Bega, Adrian van de Velde: nor quite to these alone, for almost by the side of them came Backhuysen with what then seemed a fresh rendering of the shipping and the sea, and Berghem and Jan Both, whose elegant, now underrated Classicism has certainly an interest of its own.

Ostade is the Dutch etcher whose work, next to Rembrandt's, has excited the most curiosity and commanded the steadiest approval. Even when, about a generation ago, the minor people and some not very minor people of the Dutch School fell out of fashion, Ostade retained something of popular and something of



THE FAMILY

OSTADE

critical interest. It has been recognized, almost always, that he was a very complete craftsman, and, again, the vision that he presented of the life he cared to illustrate and reflect has never been difficult of acceptance. With Ostade, he who runs may read. Never has Ostade to be met half-way—like Bega sometimes, in his own day; like Whistler, in ours; like Rembrandt, too, in not a few among the later and greater of his performances and undertakings.

The mental qualities which we discover in Ostade's prints are those which we discover in his pictures; and so, too, as far as different mediums of expression may reveal them, are his technical accomplishments. He was not imaginative; yet an astonishing memory and close observation of facts within his view permitted him to be dramatic. Of Composition he was a master perhaps even more certainly excellent than Wouvermanns. Nothing is wrong in that respect, and everything that is right seems also to be right so easily, that the art in it may, to the superficial, unqualified student, pass unperceived. The draughtsmanship is expressive; and it was not altogether Ostade's fault, though one doubts whether he felt it to be his misfortune, that that draughtsmanship, when concerned with humanity, was concerned chiefly with the ugly and sometimes with the grotesque. He filled his panel or his copper, neatly, appropriately, very amply, without a suggestion of crowding. His narrative had its fitting background, its significant detail. And when, in thinking of his technique, we narrow our thought to the technique of Etching, we find that of that he was, in his own way, within the limits of his theme and his conception, a scarcely surpassable master.

Clearly then, it is the business of the intelligent Collector of wide aims and tolerant judgment to be

possessed of one or more examples of the bitten and printed work of this deft practitioner with the etching needle. Is one to name several of his pieces, or may one confine oneself to two, because two seem—to me at least—very specially desirable? They are "The Family" and "The Peasant Paying his Reckoning"—both of them interiors, but interiors in which, almost as much as in the open air itself, the play of light counts for not a little of the interest. Outside scenes there are, such as the "Spectacle Seller" and the squarish print of a man leaning over the hatchway of his door, framed in the picturesqueness of his greenery-laden house-front, which, both in character and illumination, show a conspicuous and characteristic merit; yet it is perhaps in that couple of strongly contrasted interiors which I have just before named that there is reached the high-water mark of Adrian van Ostade's achievement. The little tavern scene displays with utmost naturalness the departure of the customer who has fumbled for coin; mine hostess stands by to receive it. The domestic interior has no blot in it but the quite lamentable and, one might really say, the quite superfluous plainness of the mother: that more than middle-aged drudge, upon whom yet there has fallen nothing of the dignity of years. The man is more sympathetic. But the best part of the drama is almost independent of the persons, save that it is their lives of humblest labour and of scanty yet welcome and agreeable rest that each skilfully introduced and delicately elaborated detail contributes to depict. Yes; certainly Ostade's "The Family" is among the *chefs d'œuvre* of the art of Etching. Homely indeed in theme and *milieu*, it is yet true and complete: a plebeian Classic.

Bega, Ostade's best pupil, who etched less than Ostade—whose prints, though coming into note of late

LA MÈRE AU CABARET

BEGA

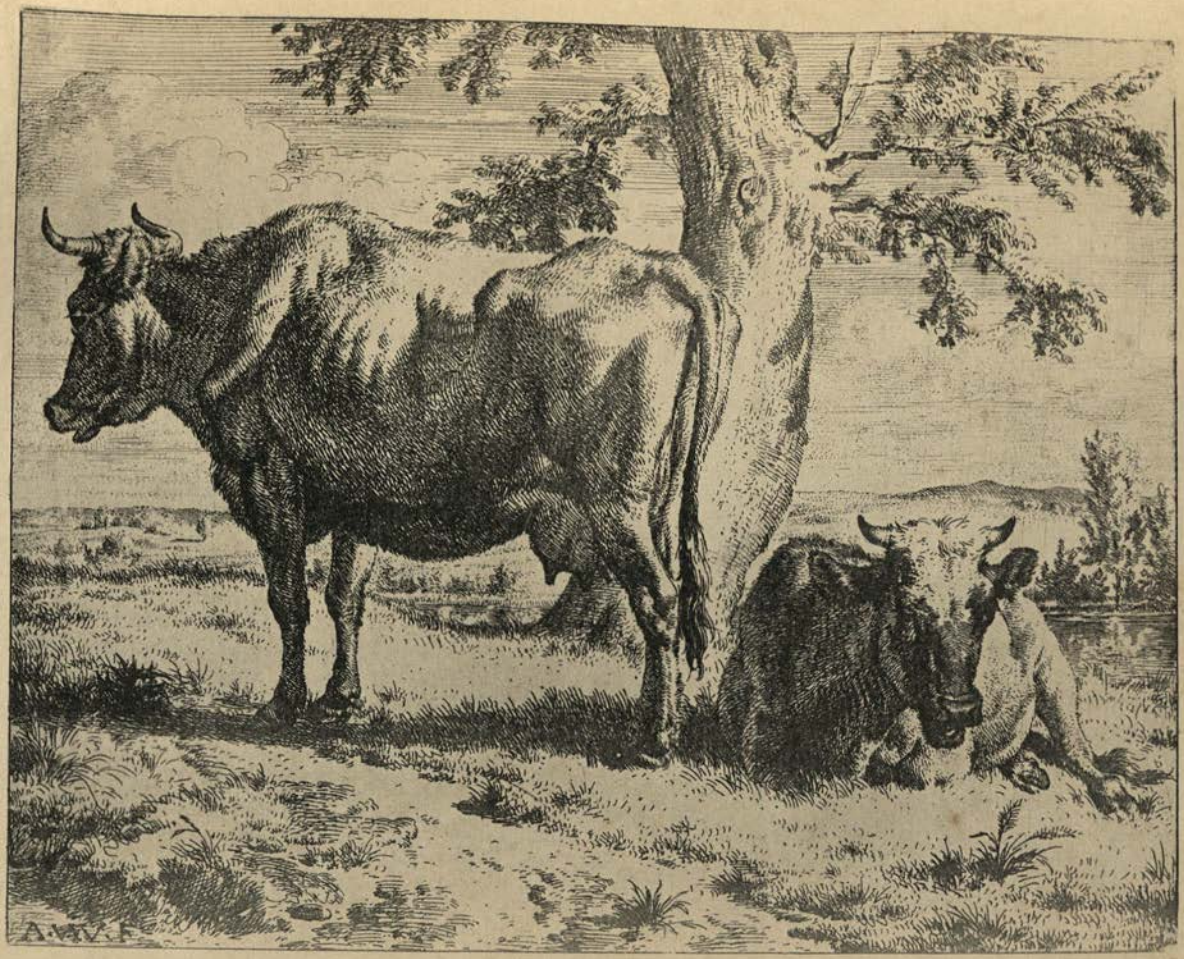
years, have not even at present quite the vogue of Ostade's etchings—is full, is visibly much fuller than his erstwhile master, of virile qualities; he has energy and decision; he is more largely pictorial; he is certainly broader in the effects aimed at, and thoroughly attained. About his strength there is refreshment and renewal. His work itself—not necessarily the actual measurement of his plates, but their contents—is on a larger scale than Ostade's. In a single picture, with etching-needle and acid, he represents less: his interest is more concentrated, and it is more intense. With less, perhaps, than Ostade's variety—and Ostade's variety is far from being inexhaustible—Bega depicts with an amazing force and charm those two things in the world with which he elects to be concerned: shadow and light in the first place, and, in the second, the human life of the class it has been his pleasure or his fate to live amongst. Bega's best day—with the collector—has still to come. His method of conceiving the etched picture, and of executing it, are in accord—more in accord than Ostade's generally, or than any other Dutchman's save the great Rembrandt—with the ideals that are spreading, and have spread far already, amongst the most modern-minded amateurs and practitioners of the Etcher's art.

Of the Thirty-six Etchings of Bega, no less than twenty-one are either single heads or busts or single full-length figures. They have afforded an opportunity for perception of character, for draughtsmanship rapid and decisive—and in both these things Bega excelled—but, obviously, they could afford no opportunity for dramatic action, or revealing pose, in which he excelled also, nor for that stirring of the depths of character and feeling which comes but when people are in happy or unhappy contact. For these things, though it must be remem-

bered, no doubt, that the Dutch boor is stirred by no wide range of emotion—only by love of family, by fondness for good cheer, by amorous impulse, Bega warrants us in supposing—for these things we have to have recourse to the remaining plates, tavern scenes many of them, of which one of the most expressive is "Le Cabaret," No. 35 in M. Dutuit's Catalogue. "La Jeune Aubergiste" and "La Jeune Cabaretière caressée" are of the same order. They—and all the best of Bega's work—are of a realism vivid, unflinching, and for ever picturesque.

The plague, which ravaged Haarlem, put an end to Bega's life in 1664, when he was barely middle-aged. With his temperament vivacious and masculine there would have been reserved for his later years yet more abundant triumphs. But as it is the Collector can less and less afford to neglect to be acquainted with the existing instances of his penetration, firmness, and brilliance. Bega on his own not unlimited lines is a master personal and unsurpassable. He is no temporary fashion. He will be more in vogue to-morrow than he is at this hour. Bega is one of the Etchers who have come to stay.

Sound as may be Ferdinand Bol's method in Etching, and complete, in a sense, as may be his work, it is extremely doubtful whether the prints of this important and prolific pupil of Rembrandt will have again the interest which they at one time seemed to afford. Among Dutch and Flemish Etchers, those who rank, and will continue to rank, as next in succession to the supreme master, are—one may be certain—not his immediate pupils (some of whom, by the by, did much of the minor work that has been called his), but, rather, the artists wholly independent of him (Ostade and Bega to wit), or even, not only independent, but in aim and



LES DEUX VACHES DANS UN PRÉ

ADRIAN VAN DE VELDE

method as remote as it is possible to be from him, such as Berghem and Jan Both. Let us, however, do justice to the occasional appearance in Ferdinand Bol's work of a piece not wanting in individual attractiveness, such as the plate (Bartsch, No. 15), which shows a youngish woman facing the spectator, at an open window, and holding pears in her right hand. It has a mild charm.

Berghem and Both went into Italy—were both, in a sense, Classic—and they are not differentiated inaccurately when it is said and remembered of them that Berghem saw the Classic land—the South I mean—in his own fashion, occupied not only with portions of its landscape, faithfully transcribed, but with its peasantry, its flocks and herds; and that Jan Both, although a copyist in no wise, did follow more or less in Claude's footsteps—idealizing things—weather included—distinctly more than Claude did (for Claude's feet were planted often enough on the firm earth)—less occupied than either Claude or Berghem with the concerns of the hour—with the real and daily life. We recognize in Both the atmosphere of poetry—its traditional entourage of landscape: something of the great manner. Jan Both was a stylist, indubitably; but, like some other reputed and, within limits, quite perfect stylists (Walter Pater, for instance, in Literature), lacking in the variety and fearlessness, the planned, effective, sudden discords of the greater masters.

I will single out for special mention Both's "Le Trajet." Among Berghems let there be cited "The Bag-piper and the Horseman" (Bartsch, 4), and the Set of perfect little Cattle pieces (Bartsch, 23 to 28). By Paul Potter there is a Set of Horses, in detail extraordinarily truthful, but very *terre-à-terre*. In reality, no Cattle piece—either for satisfactory representation of the beasts, or for agreeable, natural, happy, not too idealized Landscape behind

them—beats, or, in all this Dutch and Flemish School, really comes up to, the Adrian van der Velde which is a subject of illustration in this volume. To it therefore the reader may be at once referred.

Jan Fyt was an artist of a certain vigour, and there is visible refinement in Karel du Jardin. Everdingen made somewhat attractive prints of Landscape: chiefly in Norway. Waterloo was a landscape-etcher prolific and quite justly popular—an artist in Etching to whom a large measure of his ancient popularity should surely and now promptly return. The qualified artists of that day, all of them, understood Composition, and Waterloo not the least. Tree structure, also, Waterloo knew—as Ruysdael did, of course, with his "Three Oaks"—and Waterloo was sometimes great in the expression of the grace of foliage: never more unexceptionable, I think, than in the big tree to the right in "Les Deux Ponts"—it is No. 47 in Dutuit—a piece Waterloo's own very much, yet one in connection with which it is not irrelevant to think of Claude. This whole print is charming. It is more lastingly satisfactory, for instance, than the perhaps at the first moment more attractive "Le Troupeau près du Pont de Pierre," at which one does not look long before discovering, about the bridge, an indecision or vagueness, where vagueness should not be—there is something unaccounted for, which firm, not to say searching, draughtsmanship would certainly have revealed. Now, "Les Deux Ponts" has no lapses, and it has an abundant beauty.

The two Dutch Etchers of the Sea were Zeeman and Backhuysen. Méryon—brought up as a sailor, it is worth recollecting—admired Zeeman sufficiently to copy him. And Zeeman had spirit. Backhuysen's prints, of size more customary—Renier Zeeman's were very small—have freedom, like the other, and great sense of action.

LES DEUX PONTS

WATERLOO

They are vivid, indeed, but they are never subtle; and when they practise an economy of means we need not think they have great claim to learning. Backhuysen's storms are apt to be a little of the Stage. His quieter waters have not the flow of Seymour Haden's, or of Storm van's Gravesande's. We end the chapter on a cheerful note, therefore, and that because a survey of this matter tends to the conclusion that in the Moderns there is not only accomplishment, but progress. Some of the minor Classics in the art of Etching—in their own day, and later, justly remarkable—are exposed to a rivalry formidable, dangerous. In more than one case it may be theirs, in process of time, to submit to an overthrow.

CHAPTER III

BAUER

FROM the great days of Rembrandt, the art of Etching, in Holland, lay neglected—it lay to be revived there only in our own day, and in that, most of all, perhaps, by Bauer.

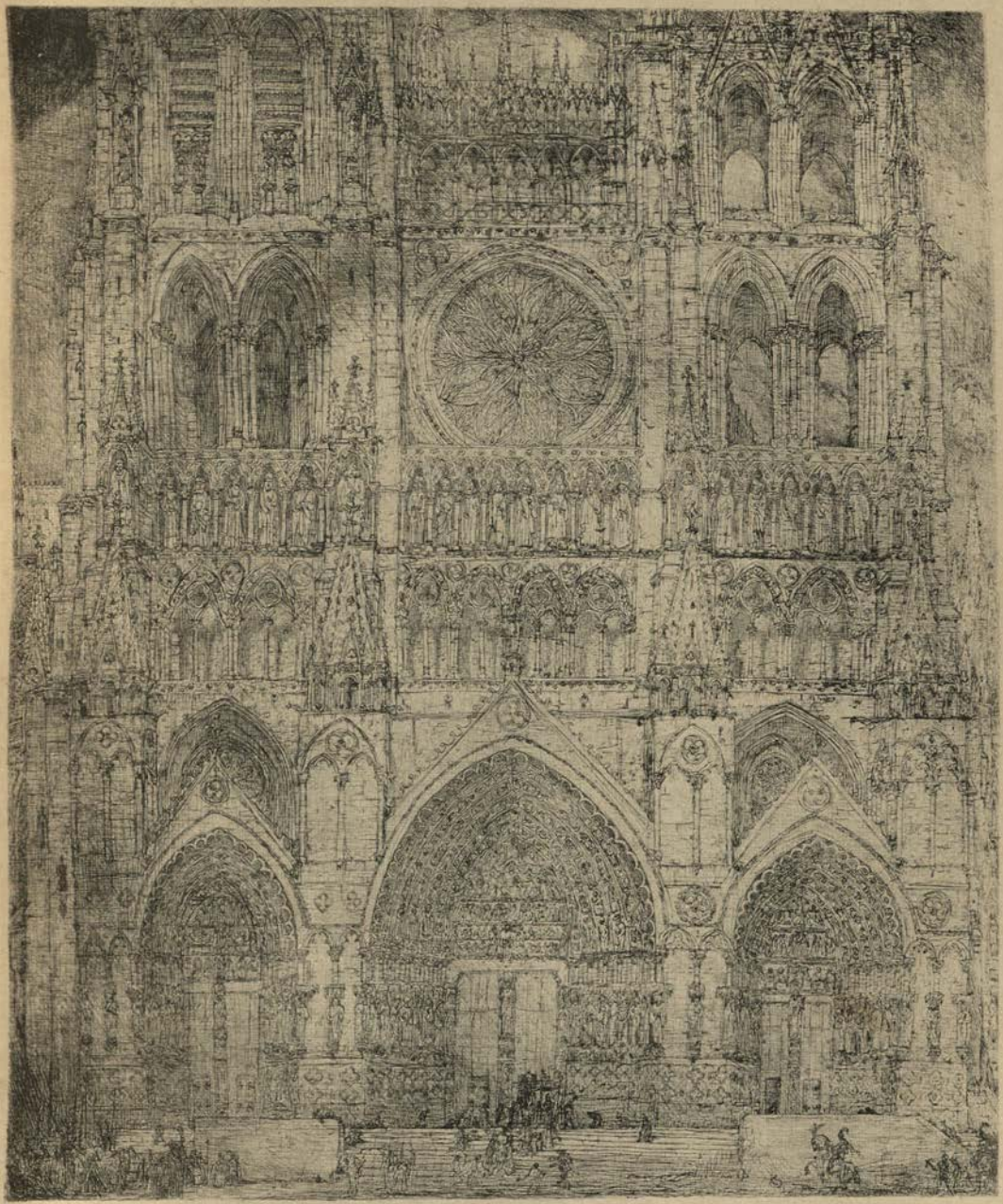
The interest of individuality belongs to Bauer's work, though the first, most evident fact made clear to one about it is the immense debt to Rembrandt that nearly every plate in it reveals. But that is not unnatural, when one remembers that the debt was incurred by a Dutchman, not even now of more than middle age; a Dutchman who had studied, and had had every reason to study, the one great Dutch genius, and whose opportunities of knowing what were the thoughts and ways of masters outside his own land had been comparatively few. For Bauer, when he directed his steps abroad, directed them to London and Paris, much more than to Spain, Egypt, and India. One cannot help thinking that it was the sacred pieces of Rembrandt that set him on his quest of his particular themes—this notwithstanding that a Rembrandt figure is Dutch always rather than Oriental, even when it is in Jerusalem that he is supposed to stand, with gravity and patience. Again, Bauer's larger compositions have often a somewhat Rembrandt-like scheme of light and shade; and the point with which Bauer lightly traces a city group, in Cairo perhaps, or perhaps in Benares, owes much to the point that traced and individualized each outlying figure in the "Christ healing the Sick."

So much for the resemblance: the difference now engages us. It is not our own "Sacred History" with which Bauer has chiefly been occupied. The faiths of Egypt and India, the hold of Mahomedanism or Brahminism on these Eastern peoples, and the people's daily lives, and, in India especially, their constant concern with great religious spectacle and service—with the sense of pageantry, the sense of awe—these things, observed by him closely and sympathetically, are really the material of Bauer's plates: Oriental picturesqueness and Oriental pageantry are their *raison d'être*. And so Bauer delights to place against the swelling lines of vast mosques, or under dainty minarets that mount in thin, clear Eastern air, immense crowds of the Faithful, expectant and worshipping. He gives to them—in a measure, of course, he found in them—stately rhythm of movement. They are like some great Chorus. For all that, each person of each group has his own life; he is a separate study of the artist's, or a separate memory; and each group is complete in itself, and the truth of each is compatible with the effectiveness of all. "Holy Ganges" is, of the earlier plates, one of the most memorable, and amongst the most recent, and a fine one, is "Benares," brilliant in light. Recent too, and impressive—broad and rich in its general effect—is "Funérailles." Here again it is the Ganges—the participating crowd above the river. It is stately beyond measure; and, while elaborate, it is spontaneous and emotional. I call the composition faultless, and the scale—and that, in one sense, is more than can be said of most of Bauer's larger pieces, in which, not seldom, the composition is a little scattered, and the scale of the representation such that the print at any distance from one, further than one's hand, becomes ineffective—so many little people, here,

there, everywhere, and put in, too, so lightly. Yet all the best of Bauer's pieces are rich in suggestiveness.

Bauer is painter and draughtsman—I mean draughtsman upon drawing-paper—almost as much as etcher. Spanish Church subjects occur amongst his drawings, though of the Spanish churches that interested him he has executed no plates. It is otherwise with one great French subject—the West Front of Amiens, of which he made first a fine drawing, and then a poetic, fascinating print. That is unique in his work, and we must talk about it more particularly.

It was no part of the Dutch artist's plan to work in any medium at Amiens. When he passed through it, he was on his road to Paris; the East, probably, his eventual destination. But that West Front arrested him. He made his drawing; and, as I have said already, it was a fine one. Then he did an original thing. Habitually the artist—be he who he may—draws or etches with strong light and shade a Gothic church, crowded, almost of necessity, with ornament and detail. The good *drawing* of Amiens has light and shade, very visibly, though less obtrusively, less broadly, than in such records we are wont to find it. But the *print* has scarcely *any* light and shade. And the absence of even an approach to marked chiaroscuro fits in completely and most happily with the scheme of the design. For in Bauer's etching that West Front fills the whole plate—fills and, as it were, overflows it. At top and bottom, side and side, there is this endless tracery, and nothing else—this dream of lace-like stone. There is no foreground—or practically no foreground: a Knight, I believe, spear in hand (is it not?), is on a prancing horse in one corner. That is to recall the Middle Ages—nothing else. Profoundly interesting is it to compare this West Front Etching with Lepère's, of



THE WEST FRONT, AMIENS

BAUER

the same nominal theme. In conception, in execution, in the very period suggested (for Lepère, with his *inventaire*, with his protesting crowd, is modern), the two plates are as different as two plates can possibly be. Of Lepère's I speak, in something more of detail, in its proper place. Here I shall say only, that a piece of good fortune having made me the possessor of both these prints, I should be hard put to it to know which of the twain would be the less difficult to abandon.

CHAPTER IV

OTHER MODERN ETCHERS IN THE LOW COUNTRIES

SOME recent tendency to collect Josef Israels's Etchings claims to be chronicled in a chapter that deals briefly with modern Dutch Etchers other than Bauer. That tendency or disposition must be considered mainly as a tribute paid, in the veteran's latest years, to one whose place in modern Dutch Painting has been a good deal that of a path-breaker. The Etchings shine with a reflected light. It might have been otherwise. A painter such as Israels—a sentimental artist, an expressive though melancholy draughtsman, who has made so little call upon the resources of colour—who in the employment of colour has been content habitually with grey and brown, though emerging just now and then so far from that reserve as to note, in his serenest moments, the presence in Nature of grey-pearl and of a faded or pale opal—might conceivably have found something of a new kind to say in Etching, or have had a new way of saying it. But that has not been Israels's, or Israels's Collectors', good fortune.

That Israels's etchings—which in Mr. H. Huberts's careful Catalogue of them, published in 1910, in Amsterdam, number Seven-and-thirty—should much repeat the motives of the pictures, is no occasion for surprise, nor perhaps for regret; and if we did not know, by reason of the paintings, the mind that the paintings express, we should possibly consider that in Israels there was revealed a

serviceable light of the second order in Etching. As it is, little is revealed, though something is repeated. As it is, Israels's prints seem to me no more great than Corot's etchings; indeed, they are less noteworthy than those, for in their scantiness there is little economy, and in their humble and domestic Genre there is little of the virtue of design. Their inclination seems to have been towards a somewhat empty and inexpressive largeness. Nor, in that just reasonable command of the technique of Etching, which is the most that they evince, is there much to commend them. But there is nothing meretricious in these etchings. They are sound, as far as they go. It may be I shall be thought inappreciative because I do not find them really touching, or, in the last resort, desirable. In feebler terms than his canvases, they seem to me to utter the not inviting message of Josef Israels's art.

One's tone becomes more cordial when one turns to Witsen—a genuine etcher, who has "put his back" into Etching; who, in the art of Etching, has many things to say. Generally his work—like that of his elder, just spoken of, for the matter of that—deals with Dutch themes: it is of no moment whether one piece, that in the word of the American I cannot "locate"—a vision of a cab under the shadow of a "viaduct," or, as I should have supposed, a great, broad railway bridge—has as its actual scene Amsterdam or London. I think it must be London, however, for there is a "Thames Embankment" besides. Habitually, in any case, and with remarkable variety, this artist, so veracious and so learnedly simple —in these respects so characteristically Dutch—is occupied with the cities and the landscape of his native lowland: the cities, now quaint, now busy, but always with an aspect in a measure conservative; the country, a country that can have beauty, but only for the seeing eye: little

prettiness it has, certainly, and nothing that to the commonplace could seem grand—though grandeur there is really in the charm of vast distances, and, as we have known from Constable's day and Crome's—but no, from the day of Rembrandt and De Koninck—in the passage of shadowing clouds over the dome of sky.

Witsen does not often address himself to extended visions of the town, like Van der Heyden and Berkheyden; and when he does, why should we wonder that his work has not the large, compelling unity of one of the very greatest of his compatriots, Van der Meer of Delft? Here and there it is a scene of shipping—masts for background—here and there indeed it is a *Place;* but much oftener it is the "removèd ground," as the Ghost said in *Hamlet*, of some quiet corner, and such a piece as that which has as its title "A Small Old House" is as full of visible veracity as of tranquil charm. In town and in the country Witsen makes great use of weather. What has been called "Etcher's light" is an illumination to which he seldom resorts. His chiaroscuro is readily accounted for. It has no conventions to be accepted or puzzled over. Here is "Sunny Day at a Landing-place," or "Oude Schans," a scene at Amsterdam—snow on the grouped boats ice-bound on the stream; snow on the tarpaulin that covers the stack of timber on the quay.

In the country Witsen's pure landscape appears less personal; but when the landscape is background for the figure—the figure, large in the foreground, engaged in country work—not only is the composition apt to be interesting, but the sentiment is apt to be impressive. Of course it suggests Millet; but Millet always with a difference. Each study of the peasant form and of the peasant life has Millet's sincerity; but never in Etching did Millet carry the rendering of atmospheric effect as far

as Witsen has carried it in "Twilight on the Heath," and seldom has out-of-door life, and the slow changes of the hour in the wide and silent fields, been more convincingly depicted than in "Potato Gatherer." The woman stands —her head and looseish work-disordered hair against the calm horizon-light—as she empties the heavy pailful into the large sack on the ground. To know Witsen's etchings, is to know, and to know closely, something of Holland.

The quiet excellence of Storm van's Gravesande is nothing new to the connoisseur. This artist is almost of the generation of Israels, and the quality of his quite recent labour, in Etching and in Painting, attests his staying power. When Philip Hamerton wrote of him, more than forty years ago, he seems to have been chiefly bent on large, free, spirited transcripts of the aspects of the shore and sea. These he has not forsaken. At least one plate of a quality that it is doubtful if his youth ever reached was shown at the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts in the spring of 1910. But it is already a good many years ago that there was first visible, from his needle, a church interior, very striking—looking towards the light—towards a great window—the motive very much the motive of Cameron in his wonderfully poetic treatment of "The Five Sisters"—the Early English window at York. Storm van's Gravesande's was an experiment and a success. And this free etcher—the greater portion of whose engraved work may perhaps be spoken of with no offence or disparagement as sketches large, brilliant, and expressive—appeared, only a few years since, at the Exhibitions of the International Society as a veritable master of Still Life in Oil Painting. His "Coins de table"—white draperies on which fruit glowed and silver gleamed—are rich and broad and delicate to a

degree that would have been enjoyed by Chardin and approved by Fantin-Latour.

Etienne Bosch, who was born in 1868 in Amsterdam, has in the matter of Etching produced by this time works which are much more than of promise. A painter who has wisely travelled, who has not only seen, but has stayed much in, Paris and England—the greater part of his landscape work has its origin in Italy. Venice he has not avoided, but I doubt whether at least in Etching he has wrung from it any such effect as he has found or made at Salerno, in a print wherein land and building, composition—one may almost say, thought—are Classic essentially: somehow they are at one and the same time austere, complex, and suave. "Salerno" has nobility. To be that which it is, it must have been conceived by one of dignified vision. The same with the "Crusaders" —a subject obviously different: a medieval figure-subject, wanting neither in character nor action: a piece which certainly may be set beside the finest Bauer (unless that finest be the "Amiens," almost wholly a dream) or beside Mr. Spence's wonderful realizations of the citizen, the soldier, and the inspired mystic—George Fox—in our mid-Seventeenth Century in England. "Salerno" and "Crusaders" are enough to cite as evidence of power and dignity and range: they are enough to cause us to address ourselves with curiosity to further exploration of Etienne Bosch's work.

Zilcken's etchings aroused a certain curiosity and met with a certain approval before it was possible to be much occupied with Etienne Bosch, and his name deserves to be mentioned as that of an Etcher of some spirit—of a certain lightness of touch. Apparently he is not much collected in England at the present time. If that is so, a certain injustice may be done him; but the student

must admit also the possibility that his talent has never risen to that level at which attention is not only secured, but retained. Every generation shows artists in every art whose performances command for them just the attention of the passing hour, and these are not by any means all of them men who have struck for a while the popular taste only. Some of them are artists who at a given moment have engaged the hopes of the connoisseur. And perhaps it is for the connoisseur's moral advantage that such men should be; for who so well as they bring home to him either his occasional fallibility or his regrettable ingratitude.

The busy little land nearest to Holland—which had its great period of reproductive line-engraving more than two centuries ago—has played but a small part in the revival of Etching. Belgium has given us indeed a respectable aquafortist in Baertsoen—a native, as it seems, of Ghent—and an aquafortist who, in another sense, is not respectable at all—Félicien Rops. Mr. A. M. Hind, in his *Short History of Etching and Engraving*, has neatly and moderately said of this perverted being: "His creation goes so far beyond the normal limits of delicate suggestion, that the majority of his work must still remain a closed book to most amateurs." And Mr. Hind "regrets" that Rops's "almost exclusive subject was the satire of the demi-monde of Paris and Brussels."

Here there arise two questions. First, Was it really a satire—was satire the main object, or was apparent satire merely a peg and an excuse for a less worthy offering? I think, for my own part, it was not much beyond the latter. Rops was a cynic, doubtless—never, that I could discover for one moment, in his achievements of inconceivable obscenity, a satirist of high intent. However that may be, Is there in Rops, one asks—the

second question—Is there in Rops an artist of talent important enough to call for much "regret" at the misapplication of such gift as he had? Are we cheated of anything?

I think Rops was inventive in his morbid groove. In any other groove, I am not sure that he would have been inventive at all. He was a well-trained Academic draughtsman. By long practice it came easily to him to draw the figure firmly and correctly. Yet his "line" is strangely uninteresting. So is his subject, for the most part—or so is his particular vision. It was a bitter and a cold, even a dull capacity—the "talent" of Rops. And with his work the Collector of high taste need be in no way concerned.

CHAPTER V

CLAUDE

A WORD, first, not about Claude, but to lead up to him. While Claude was practising his art in Italy, two men of some individuality and distinction—but small indeed by his side—worked in the land he early left. One of them was Jacques Callot—busy with incidents, a teeming population, and topographical record—a fertile, ingenious, sometimes inventive artist: one, nevertheless, about whom sustained enthusiasm is impossible. The other was Israel Silvestre, born at Nancy in 1621; travelling three times to Italy during his young manhood; then, from 1659, settled in Paris, where, with lodgings granted him in the Louvre, he lived prosperous for the long remainder of his days. I have no active wish to contest Sir Sidney Colvin's verdict on Silvestre's etched landscapes, that "printed with strong mechanical contrasts of dark and light, they are, to modern eyes, pedantic and tiresome."

Now, Claude.

Robert Dumesnil gives a list of Forty-two Etchings by the Master. In 1872, when, for the first and only time, the great majority of the pieces were gathered together, from the portfolios of Seymour Haden, Richard Fisher, Julian Marshall, and other important Collectors at the Burlington Fine Arts Club, it was remarked, in the Club's brief Introduction to the Show, that the Forty-two numbers of Dumesnil "include some small and unimportant plates." The facts may perhaps be better expressed by

saying "some small"—and that means very small, for no print Claude executed was actually large—and "many unimportant." A score of plates, or perhaps only a dozen, testify adequately to Claude's capacity in Etching, and to his general greatness. They are worthy of the author of his best pictures; and they show a side of him the pictures cannot show.

Having thus of necessity reduced from some more imaginary figure the number of Claude's prints that seriously interest us, evoke our admiration, minister to our delight, add to his fame, it next is obligatory, and very disagreeable, to remember how rare are the occasions on which these prints can be obtained in good condition. The fewness of the plates, and then the fewness of the fine impressions, limit most lamentably the opportunities of the Collector, and have tended, in the recent Past, to keep Claude's engraved work rather in the background, amongst noble prints, the offspring of more prolific and, in some respects, more happily placed masters. Still, as an Etcher, Claude remains, without question, a great and precious Classic. His achievements are amongst those—and they are never many—which help to set or to sustain a high standard of taste. In the art they are landmarks. Would that a little oftener they could pass, in fine condition, from hand to hand amongst private students who can pay substantially for things they prize, yet are not choked with riches! But as that may not be, let us profit diligently by the infrequent opportunities, when they occur; let us then do what we can to get them; and let us visit reverently the Print Rooms of Museums, by which so many of the best have been already, and intelligently, absorbed, and if that may be too, see also the cabinets of some rare affluent folk, and wise, poor men who deny themselves popular pleasures, and to whose

honour as Collectors the best things of Claude, in their best form, are wont to contribute.

If the cause of the exceptional rarity of Claude's fine prints should come to be inquired into, as a matter of interest, it would behove us to remember that in his practice of Etching Claude stood conspicuously aloof, even from his contemporaries. His circumstances were different. He etched in Rome, wellnigh solitary, during the very years when, in a remote Northern city, the master etcher of all time was working in profitable companionship. There were collectors in Amsterdam, and there were print-sellers—there were possible rivals. At no late period of his life in the Netherlands, many etchings of Rembrandt had a more or less definite money value—it may be doubted, seriously, whether Claude often bethought himself to offer for sale a print.

I cannot quite follow Hamerton in his declaration that "Claude's superiority as an Etcher is chiefly a technical superiority." Rightly enough, indeed, that almost earliest serious critic of the art of the aquafortist goes on to add that Claude "could lay a shade more delicately, and with more perfect gradation, than any other etcher of Landscape." But how often did he do it? And is not the most perfect technical work of Claude in Etching reserved for some half-dozen, at most a dozen, masterpieces? These it is which; in virtue, not of their high craftsmanship alone, but of their surpassingly felicitous union of high craftsmanship with dignity of composition, and noble vision, and high taste, and charm of theme, the English Collector of To-day should be increasingly and above all things eager to obtain. They are so Classic and so eminently fresh: they have an air *grand seigneur*, ceremonious, stately with the pageantry of Nature: they are capable, besides, of an appeal so homely, intimate, and cheerful.

What are, roughly, these masterpieces?

The answer must be to some extent a personal choice; but no one qualified at all for judgment could exclude, or banish to a secondary place, "Le Bouvier"—that sylvan scene with cattle and a stream, in the tender, restful light of the late afternoon—a piece whose merits Mr. Hamerton by no means exhausts or overstates when he pronounces, in regard to it, the verdict, "For technical quality of a certain delicate kind, this is the finest landscape etching in the world." Nor, in a fine impression—but there are impressions of it that are wrecks, absolutely—can thorough admiration be withheld from Dumesnil's No. 15, "The Sunset." It is a sunset over water, and is seen from the coast; and when the sky in it has gone—and it goes soon—everything is gone. "The Village Dance" and "Dance by the Waterside"—such graceful and engaging records of a happy peasantry and quiet weather—contribute their own note. And after them, and at the very least alongside of them in merit, there is the perhaps yet higher elegance of "Shepherd and Shepherdess conversing"—seen at its best indeed, or perhaps even seen adequately, in nothing but the rare First State, for after that the foliage, of which the elegance had been supreme, was tampered with. Then there is the placid level landscape called "The Wooden Bridge," of which a well-chosen Second State retains most happily the merit and the charm. "The Rape of Europa" has beauty, movement, impulse, and the sense of adventure—is a piece one cannot be without. The "Campo Vaccino" may even in the Fourth State be found a not uninteresting, though necessarily a more prosaic vision: a vision, this time, of the life of Rome: idle figures in the foreground; workers in mid-distance; and the city—its arches, its arcades, its houses, towers.

LE BOUVIER

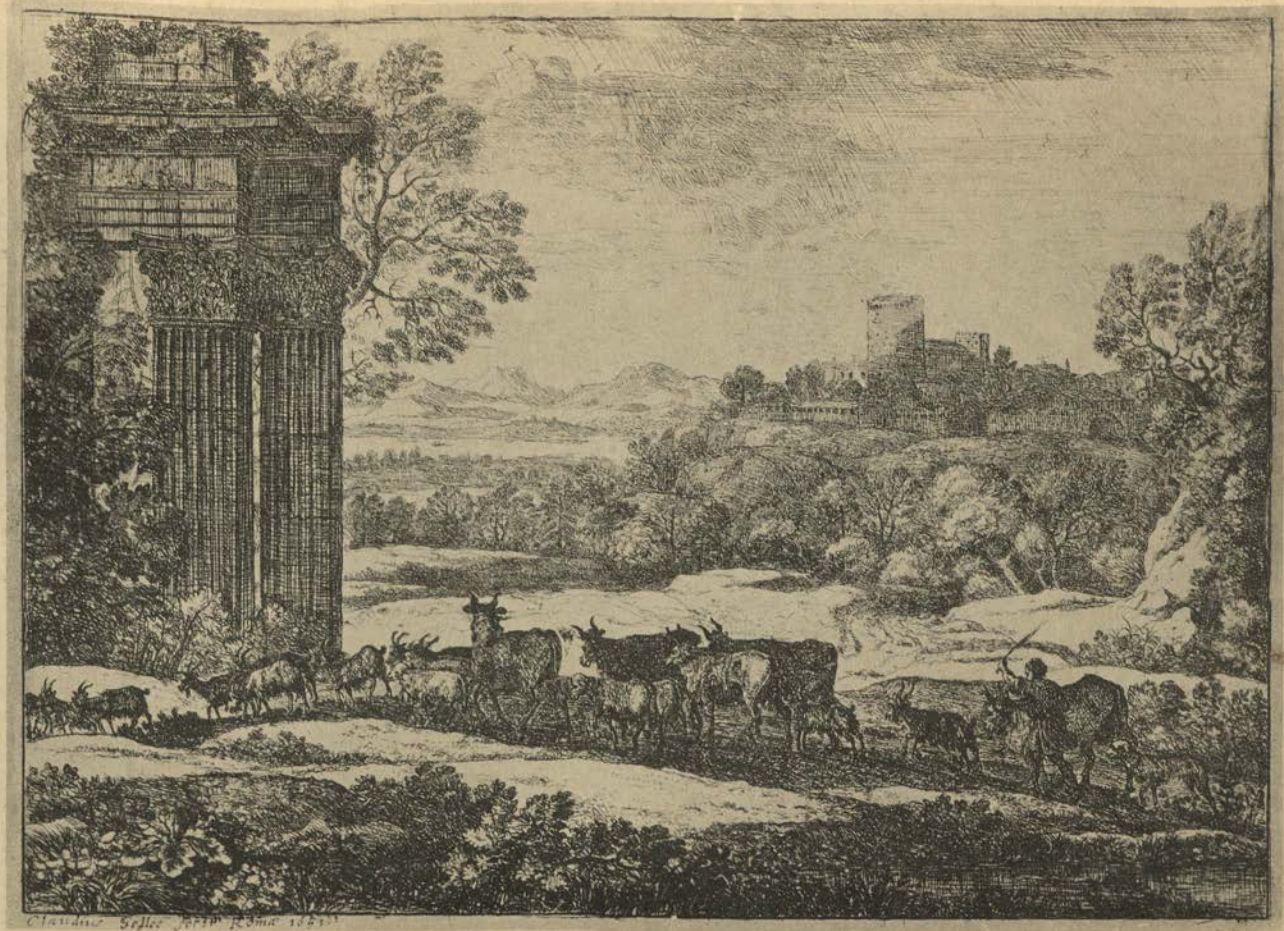
CLAUDE

There is one delightful glimpse of the Campagna, of which thus far I have not spoken. That is the "Cattle going home in Stormy Weather." I do not know any piece which, all things considered, is, in the *œuvre* of Claude, more desirable. It is a Classic Landscape, charged with the expression of everyday life. There is the long-stretched scene, bounded on the left by the significant fragment—Corinthian columns, two or three of them—of a half-ruined temple. There is an immense and noble distance. Across the great foreground, or in the extended "*second plan*" (as the French say, who know that "foreground," "distance," and "mid-distance" are terms of insufficient definition), is the hurried march of herdsmen and cattle—the herdsmen beating on the last of the oxen, for there is a threat in the sky. Would I have that sky—which has been pronounced "feeble"—expressed differently, more forcibly? Not I, for my own part. The times are showery, a little thundery, uncertain: nothing more—the heavens have vivacity and changefulness. It was no portion of the business of Claude to crowd that sky and overwhelm that earth with the dark volume of cloud that sits appropriately over "The Heath" of Constable—in Lucas's mezzotint—and over the "Solway Moss," or "The Watercress Gatherers," of Turner.

Some of Claude's plates—plates that have not been mentioned here—show accidents and failures, great or small, in the working. Master, unquestionably, of technical processes when he addressed himself very earnestly to them, Claude was not seldom a little indifferent, a little casual in regard to them—nothing is more erroneous than to represent him as concerned with technique mainly. He was concerned with his visions—with visions serene and noble and illuminating, in what-

ever medium they were expressed: oil painting, pen and bistre-washed drawing, work with the etching-needle and the acid.

If Claude's etchings have one characteristic more than another, it is their possession of that high virtue, that great, undefined quality, which we call "Style." But that is quite inadequately put. It is inadequately put because "Style," in Painting, in Engraving, and in Literature, implies a reference to something that has gone before, that has been done already—to some standard already set. But the finest etchings of Claude themselves erect that standard. By some likeness—by some nearness of approach—to them, we judge and we perceive the "Style" that is in others—in Samuel Palmer, or Waterloo, or Canaletto, say, in Etching, as in Barret and Oliver Finch, in Cotman or Harpignies, in Water Colour. "Style," in the very greatest masters, means, simply, that unobtrusively, but without intermission, these greatest masters are, from end to end, *themselves.* Solitary dictators! And that is true of Claude, pre-eminently.



THE CATTLE GOING HOME IN STORMY WEATHER

CLAUDE

CHAPTER VI

MÉRYON

THE Eighteenth Century—rich in so many forms of Art production—was, in France as in England, quite miserably poor in Etching. It is a long leap, but an inevitable one, for the student of great things, the leap from the mid-Seventeenth to the mid-Nineteenth Century—the leap from Claude to Méryon.

By the intensity of his vision, and, scarcely less, by the completeness of his performance, Méryon stands alone; and at this time it is conceded that he goes down to later ages as the companion and associate, according to the spirit, not of Canaletto or Piranesi, Hollar or Vandyke, but of Rembrandt and Dürer.

There was a limit, soon enough reached doubtless, to the things he saw and felt. Promptly receptive of some of the world's natural beauties, and an admirer, keenly intelligent, of the great things in architectural Art—appreciative therefore, of necessity, of the privileges Paris afforded him—that which impressed Méryon most profoundly was the tragedy of human fortunes; the result, sometimes, of outside circumstances, but much oftener of the incongruous elements disputing, fighting, injuring each other, in the character of Man. Charles Méryon was himself as complex as any soul, or any crowd of souls, whose fate he grieved for; and, in the poignancy of his mournings over the common lot, we recognize a deep background of sensibility to his own

personal failings. Méryon was a Verlaine of less ignoble instinct, and of more sustained and capital and intricate performance.

But partly circumstance, and partly his own temperament, left this artist, who was in some things equal to the very greatest, wanting in the range that the very greatest are apt to display. A life not long, crowded with trouble, hemmed in from day to day by narrow means, and by a shy, proud, modest nature, and an inability to produce himself in the general world (imagine Méryon a Club man!), handicapped him most fatally in any race for popularity or acceptance with genius, or even talent, more evenly balanced and more widely endowed. Of the vast field of Art Méryon tilled but a corner. But with what a result!

Speaking roughly, it may be said, "Here is a man whose fame will rest entirely upon a dozen or sixteen plates"—Méryon's "Paris." The rest of his pieces, with perhaps a single exception, he did either in mental instability or that he might meanly live, unwilling to accept assistance, and unable to achieve, in his own day, an admitted success. I have seen a grateful receipt he wrote—in his best time, for Monsieur Wasset, of the French War Office—his gratitude called forth by rare appreciation, not by money: "Monsieur Wasset, who has done me the honour to take some of my plates, the 'Abside,' a Franc and a half." If that impression of the "Abside" could be sold to-day, it would be sold very cheaply if sold for Six Hundred Pounds.

With the deep, romantic poetry of Charles Méryon's nature, one is not surprised to discover that he had English blood, as well as French, in his veins. And yet I am not sure that it was not to the excitable temperament of the humble dancing girl—Narcisse Chaspoux

was her name—and not to the English physician (once Lady Hester Stanhope's secretary and companion), of whom she was enamoured, and to whom she bore two children, that Méryon owed the greater part of his capacity, and his character both on the noble and the wayward side of it. His mother he passionately loved. His father—comparatively recent evidence assures us—was not unsolicitous for his well-being—sent him money on occasions, and wrote reasonable, even considerate, letters to him. But against his father, it appears, Méryon had this grievance—that he was born into the world bastard and outcast.

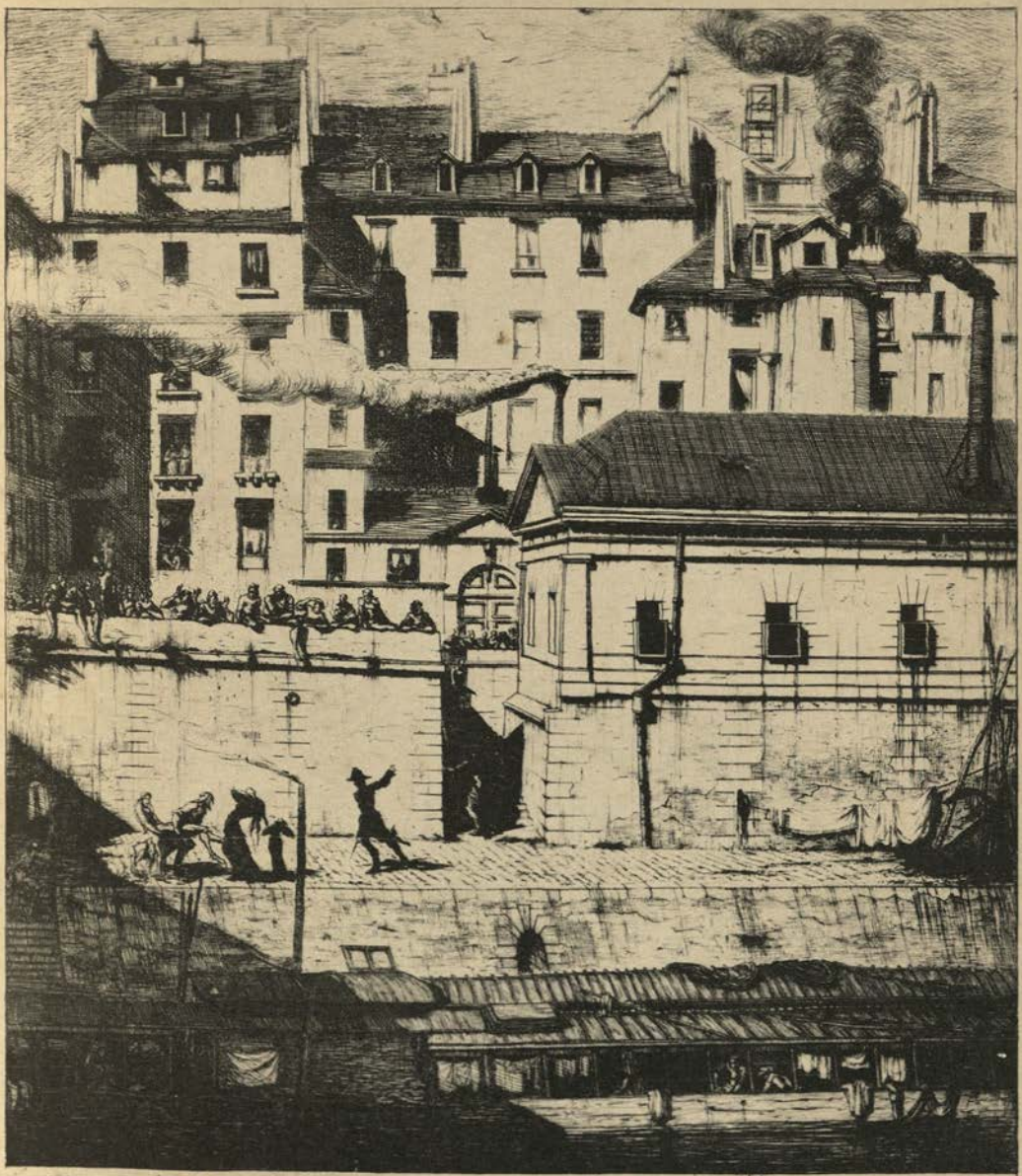
In notes that he saw fit to furnish for possible publication when the bulk of his work was done, Méryon has stated that he was born at the Batignolles—in the private hospital of Dr. Piet—on the 23rd of November, 1821. At Passy, passed part of his childhood. Later, he studied with diligence, and in 1837—the year before, or perhaps the very year in which his mother, after a life of storm, died demented—Méryon obtained entrance to the Naval School at Brest, whence, two years later, he was embarked on the *Alger*, and so, in the course of his voyaging, saw the Mediterranean and Athens. Of that experience he left no trace, unless indeed it be in the drawing of the preserved ruin of the Choragic Monument of Lysicrates, of which, long afterwards, use was made for an etching. Subsequent longer voyages bore their record in several sketches made at the Antipodes—sketches also used in minor prints which have skill, and no genius.

In 1847, Méryon came back from the uttermost ends of the earth—abandoned the life of a sailor (his first free choice) for the life of an artist. An admiration, which we cannot be asked to share, for the etchings of one Eugène Bléry—that, and colour-blindness as well—caused the now

fully grown man to concentrate his efforts on acquiring the art which at the moment he supposed Bléry to possess in perfection. He made spirited copies of Zeeman and other Dutchmen: it was not unnatural that marines should be the great attraction; and, as M. Loys Delteil points out, in the biographical sketch which precedes his elaborate Catalogue in which every Trial Proof is made into a "State," it was in the year that the tentative labours of the copyist ended that there was produced the first of the original masterpieces "on Paris"—"Le Petit Pont."

Behold him then, plunged suddenly into the labours on which depend his fame: the great plates "on Paris" not "of" it—the word is Méryon's own, used on the cover that he engraved for the Set. That Paris Set was finished in 1854. '51 seems to have furnished nothing. '52 saw wrought the "St. Etienne du Mont," "Le Stryge," "La Galerie de Notre Dame." It was reserved for the last year of all to furnish the very greatest, most elaborate, and at the same time most acceptable of the masterpieces —"L'Abside de Notre Dame." The first year—that which had given to a world not ready to receive it "Le Petit Pont"—had given also the extraordinarily characteristic and most personal plate, "La Morgue": the "Doric little Morgue" of Browning's day and poem: the Morgue, with a body borne wet and stark to its cold slabs within the building, and an eager crowd watching from window and parapet the ghastly arrival.

Had Méryon died in 1854—with the "Abside" finished —his place to-day would have been different in no wise from that which now it is. But he lived sixteen years longer—doing in one or two of them work creditable, but not magnificent; doing in several, foolish little things, or things insignificant; and, again, doing in several years, one must suppose, no work at all, in the art he had early mastered,



THE MORGUE

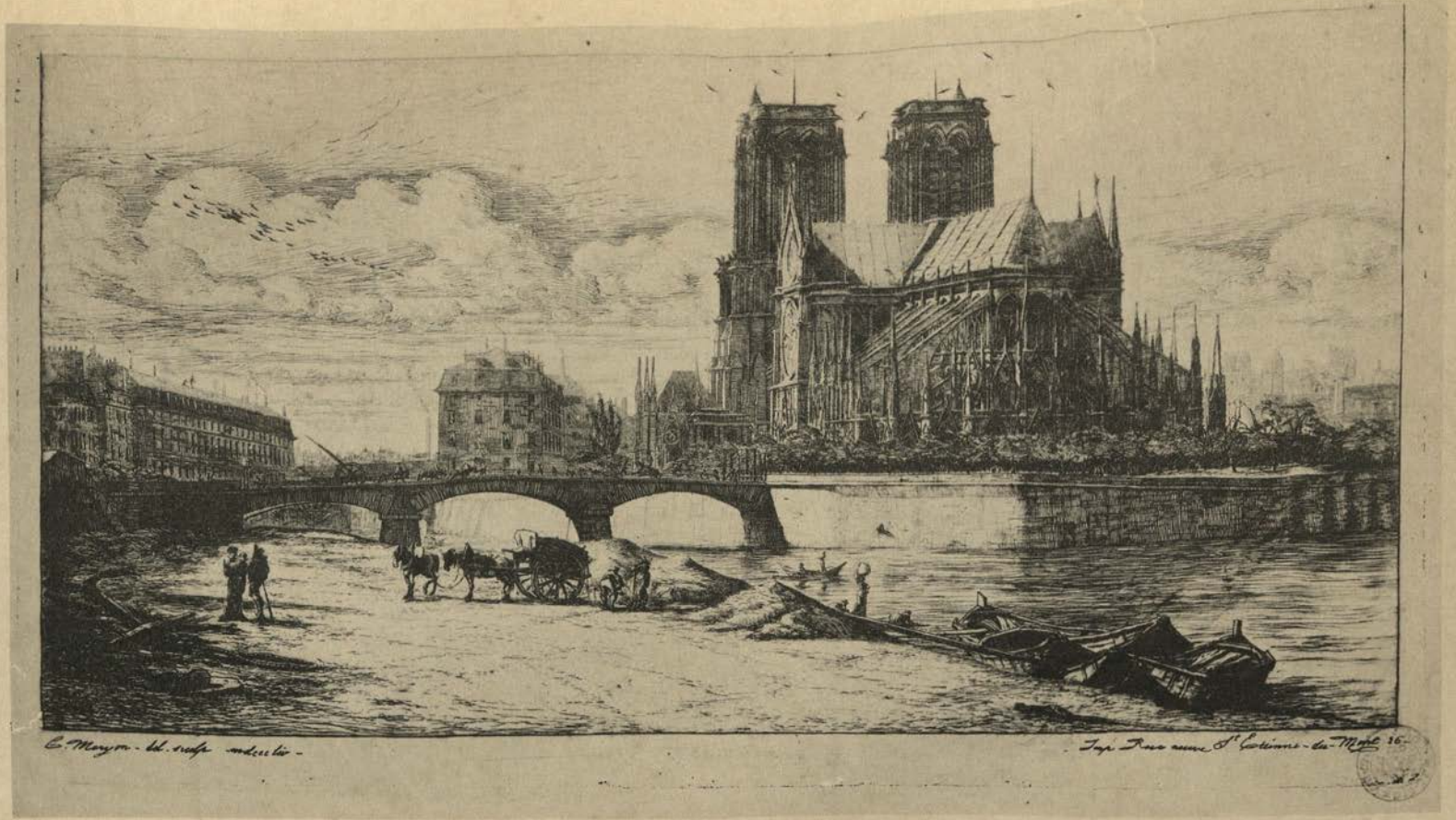
MERYON

and had sanely and splendidly practised; but in the solitude—the mental solitude at least—of his mad-house cell at Charenton, writing, always writing, incoherent memorials. He was confined and released; then again confined—his last years darkness—till, in 1868, "Finis" was written to the story of that artistic triumph, of that personal collapse. "Sa barque"—as an old comrade of Méryon's on the high seas said finely at his grave, "sa barque, à tout instant noyée, courait sans repos au naufrage."

In my *Méryon and Méryon's "Paris," with a Descriptive Catalogue of the Artist's Work*—a book of which even the Second Edition is now eighteen years old (the rarer First is of 1879)—I thought little of establishing and making the most of the smaller differences in Méryon's Work—I did not advance to the rank of "States" what were but Engraver's Proofs, the result of press-side corrections; I sought less to chronicle slight points than to insist on leading ones; and I sought most of all to convey to the reader a sense of the artist's tragedy and of his inspired production. The "Paris" of Méryon is a vision, and an avowal—an *aperçu*, shall one say, that reveals the man as well as the city—and there are times in which the record of its architectural features ("La Rue des Mauvais Garçons," the "Morgue," are a couple of instances) were not so much the end as the means. Certainly it is possible to over-emphasize the sombre and the saddened notes—I never find an actually bitter note—in Méryon's work. We are bound undoubtedly to remember, along with the gloom, the radiance and serenity of the sunshine—the "Abside" is a vision of Notre Dame quite unapproached in its perception and realization of dignified, solemn beauty. There are other pieces, too—"St. Etienne," "The Galerie." "The Galerie" was Victor Hugo's

favourite. It is characteristic of Baudelaire that the "Rue des Mauvais Garçons" should have been his.

But if one insists that the vision, the personal vision, charged so with association, and itself the heart's embodied cry, is the greatest thing in Méryon, the deepest, the most salient—and is indeed a something so overpowering that Méryon's record of his city is marked off for ever from any other record of any city that is—that need not lessen the recognition of the high faultlessness of his performance: of the technically quite perfect execution of his intricate task. Curiously modest was he as regards that technical triumph. One man found something to praise in it, and Méryon said, "You praise it too much." His pieces wanted, so he held, aerial perspective: they had not always, as a painter might express it, the proper indication of "values." And, speaking to M. Jules Andrieu of the Etching of "Le Stryge," Méryon, while allowing that his treatment of the Tower of St. Jacques was not altogether a failure, though his comrades failed with it generally "because for them the modern Square is the principal thing and the Middle Age tower an accident," said earnestly that if those comrades of his saw what he saw, "an enemy behind each battlement, and arms through each loophole," "they would do far finer things than I can do." "For often," Meryon added, "I must patch my plate so much that I am more *tinker* than Etcher." And then, with changed feeling—a fresh view of the matter—"My comrades are sensible fellows. They are never haunted by this monster." "What monster?" asked M. Jules Andrieu; "or, rather, what does this monster mean?" "The monster is mine, and that of the men who built this Tower of St. Jacques. He means stupidity, cruelty, lust, hypocrisy—they have all met in that one beast."



L'ABSIDE DE NOTRE DAME

MERYON

Truly the technique of Méryon was adapted perfectly to the themes he dealt with, and to the mental impression he sought to produce. But it was one of several possible techniques—it was one of unfaltering firmness and regularity: one of undeterred deliberation. There was no room in it for fortunate accident, for ingenious, rapid suggestion, for the line lost and found. Each line was well and truly laid—as the stones, themselves, of his buildings. Therefore, though to take exception to it is now out of date, exception has, *dans le temps*, been taken. Tasteful amateurs there have been who have objected that it lacked spontaneity. But obvious spontaneity is the virtue of the sketch, and nothing of Méryon's but the "Rue des Mauvais Garçons"—ominous, menacing—with its suggestion of Browning's

> Child, gather garments round thee! Pass nor pry—

is other than purposely elaborate, a highly wrought engraving; with all that can be realized at all, realized completely. Seymour Haden knew as well as another the virtue of a recognizable spontaneity, the charm of the sketch; and an elaboration ill-advised, ineffective, would have sent him away from the plate that displayed it. But he knew better than to blame a plate for the absence of a particular excellence appropriate only to another. And so he cherished his Méryons—knew that they were incomparably great—wiser in this respect than Whistler, who paid me, indirectly, no doubt, a pretty compliment, but gave to Méryon a foolish slap on the face, when, wishing to be gracious, he said, one day, to me, "Méryon, whom you have taken out of his *comfortable place*." For "comfortable place"—in that connection—meant, very simply, "back seat." Of that back seat, however, Méryon has not resumed the occupation.

And now a little purely practical information for the student, and more especially for the would-be Collector, of Méryon's prints. The Collector, to-day, comes late into the field, and he must be willing to pay very substantial prices, and even then, rather often, to wait a little, or even to wat long, before he gets the things he wishes. These are the penalties exacted for having waited already: waited till Méryon has become, first in England, then in America, and now at last in France, both fashionable and a Classic.

But leaving the question of prices, in any detail, to the dealer—whose own control of prices, by the by, becomes inadequate and ineffective in presence of the fevered competition between would-be buyers, and the gradual and permanent absorption by Museums of so much that is in a high degree desirable—a word may be said, with advantage, upon "states," upon paper, upon printing, and a word, too, upon principles which should govern the purchaser in his selection of his subjects. I will begin with this last. It has been said already that upon a dozen or sixteen plates rests Méryon's inalienable title to the very highest rank. But my Catalogue—divided into "The Chief Work of Méryon" and "The Minor Work of Méryon," because, in Méryon's case, the gulf was so wide—describes Thirty-five pieces among "the Chief," and between these two statements, or implications, there would seem to be a discrepancy. The explanation is, that in dealing with the chief work, it was necessary (all divisions being more or less arbitrary) to include certain pieces which might contribute to a reputation, even though they might not be of sufficient force, elaboration, or abundance to create it; and, again, that in dealing with the Paris pieces, some significance would have been lost had there been relegated to a minor place small pictorial things essentially a part

of the "Paris" in Méryon's own mind—certain "head" and "tail" pieces, for instance—and things also *not* pictorial, not even decorative: little plates of engraved verses in which Méryon set forth the sentiment of "The Morgue," as in "L'Hôtellerie de la Mort," or, as in "Qu'âme pure gémisse," bewailed the life of the city. These latter things even, the serious Collector, who desires to place himself at Méryon's point of view, may permissibly be anxious to possess. But between the "Morgue" and the verses that celebrate it he will recognize at once, or already, the distance. The "Minor Work" of Méryon—some sixty pieces—include some dullish portraits, the pieces after Zeeman and Karel du Jardin, the pieces after Ducerceau, certain rebuses, certain fancies feeble and crazy. These, never deeply desirable, may yet be desirable in different degrees. The conditions of Print-collecting change. Time was when, had it been a question of collecting Méryon, the industrious amasser would have sought to cover the whole ground. But now, what with greatly enhanced prices for any etchings that are collected at all, what with the increase in the number of collectors, what with the vast increase also in the field—the field of fine prints generally—with which it is possible for a Collector to be occupied, the custom has arisen of possessing oneself of just a carefully chosen group of any great man's work, and the carefully chosen group will not include even any of the minor and less significant labours. In the Collector's mind, the essential and the representative come to be divided sharply from the superfluous.

As to States, first published states in many cases, and second published states in others, are the states to be most sought for; though not, of course, "first states" or "second states" in M. Delteil's recent enumeration, since these are but unfinished and often rudimentary trial-

proofs. States later than the *real* "first" and "second" scarcely ever represent the plates in their perfection. But mere "state" should never be a guide; for while it is true that in such a case as the "Abside," the "Stryge," or the "Morgue," the first states were so few that there was no opportunity for their deteriorating, it is true also that there are plates in which impressions of a first state—and, oftener yet, impressions of the second—present notable differences, not of work, of course (a matter sometimes unimportant), but of intactness and beauty, which is the beginning and the end of the matter.

The best impressions of Méryon's Etchings were almost invariably printed either by himself or Delâtre. For several subjects which he thought were best displayed on it, this artist possessed himself of a thinnish, but wiry, slightly greenish paper. It gave to the "Saint Etienne du Mont," to the "Rue de la Tixéranderie," to the "Pompe Notre Dame," and others, a something that assisted the effect. Méryon cannot have liked it for the "Abside," as there is reason to believe that he used it hardly more than once for that subject. A bluish-grey paper adds an unearthly weirdness to the "Rue des Mauvais Garçons." A thin old Dutch or French paper, wiry and strong, while not thick, white originally, and only toned by age, gives of many or most subjects some of the very finest impressions. There are good things on Japanese, and on thinnest India paper that is of excellent quality. Modern Whatman and modern French paper have been used for many plates. Collectors have been known—but that was pretty much confined to the days when Méryons lacked their present value—who, as well as multiplying subjects, multiplied sometimes their impressions, that the effects on different papers might be enjoyed. I myself had once a brown "Morgue," to put alongside of my black

"Morgue"—and note the differences with pleasure. But that was luxury, and poverty compelled me to suppress it. Only, it is already something, perhaps—if a monogamist you are obliged to be—to be allowed to live with the print, as with the being, that you deliberately prefer! And when my brown "Morgue" went, it was Sarah—not Hagar—that was sent away.

CHAPTER VII

BRACQUEMOND

FÉLIX BRACQUEMOND should share, and in France does share, with Méryon, the honour of leadership in the French Revival of Etching. But he shares it on different grounds. Méryon's claim—as the last chapter, it is to be hoped, sufficiently declared—is a claim founded on the production, during but few years, of something like a dozen unsurpassable masterpieces, and on the stimulus those masterpieces have afforded, ever since, to men who, without their existence, might have etched badly—or, peradventure, not etched at all, which would have been much better. Bracquemond's claim is a claim founded on performances which, with every attraction of variety, in almost every order of subject and of craftsmanship, have been repeated through two generations, and on a life led never in isolation—on an amiable accessibility that has extended, continued, and prolonged his influence to this day.

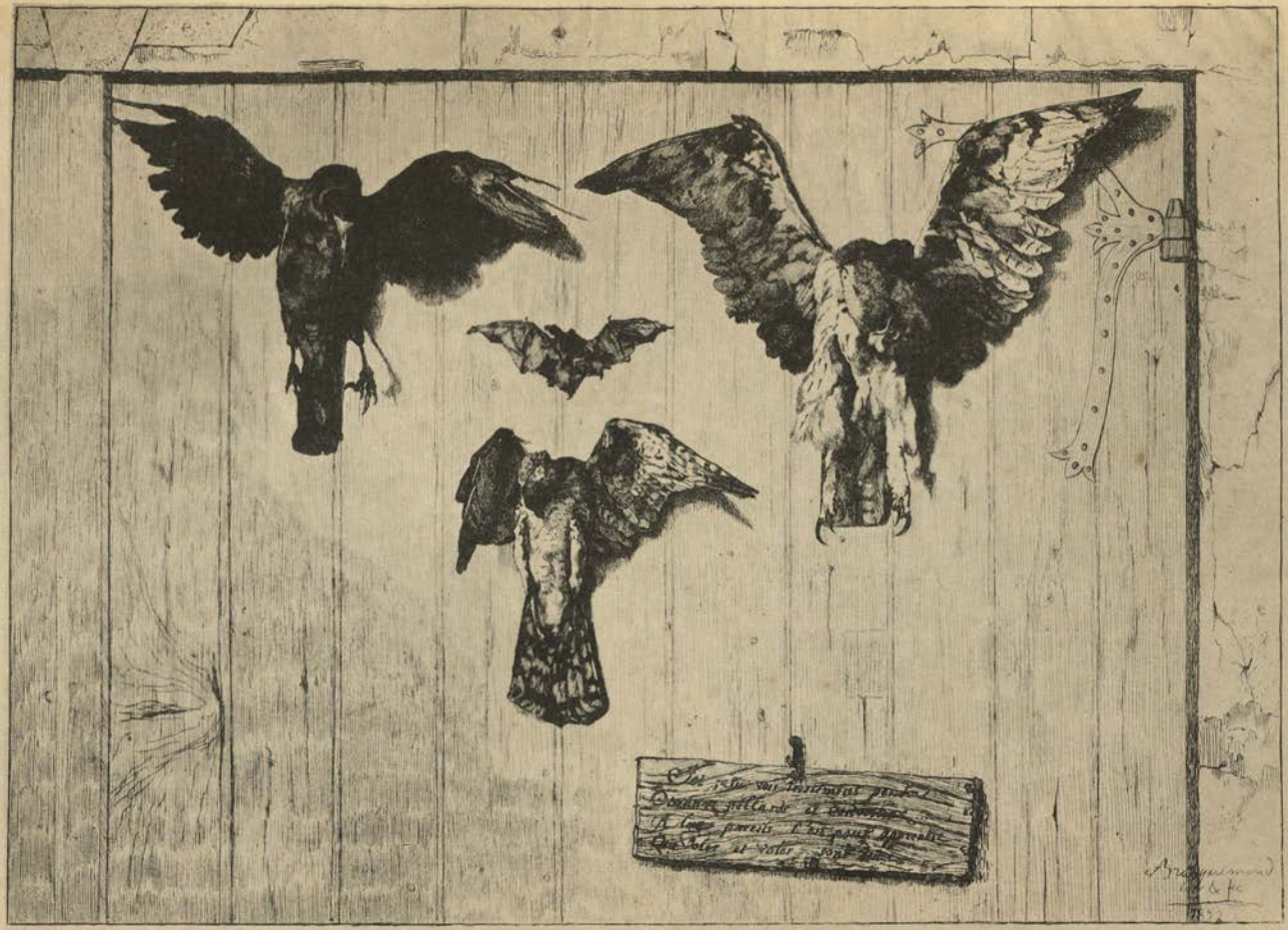
Béraldi, writing in 1885, the best account of Bracquemond that has yet been supplied—though Philippe Burty, a *chercheur, par excellence,* had written with sagacious appreciation long before—after saying of Bracquemond that he is one of those artists who have the most powerfully contributed to lift into notice, in his native land, the Art of Etching, adds, as a tribute to his courage and his character, "l'Eau-Forte ne pouvait trouver un plus rude champion." Let us inquire into and consider the course of his career, and the nature and

merit, and the defects too, of those original performances through which alone, in the long run, he may hope to survive. His influence and his personality bestow on him much credit to-day. How about the credit likely to remain to him through the work he has executed? In England certainly at present, where, of the men of his generation, Méryon alone absorbs attention, that is a matter for student and collector to bear in mind.

Bracquemond was born in Paris, in 1833: his parentage humble, apparently; for, very young indeed, he was employed at a commercial lithographer's—soon he found time to attend a drawing-school. His first etched plate—which, I am assured and can believe, is of no importance—was done in 1847. The memorable thing is, that in 1852, when he was only nineteen, he had so far developed his talent—is it, all things considered, fair to call it anything but genius?—as to be able not only to produce a portrait of his grandmother which drew to him the attention of Théophile Gautier, but to create an Etching unique in character, unique in merit—that "Battant de Porte" of which Béraldi tells the simple truth when he describes it as "une pièce capitale parmi les eaux-fortes modernes." This "Battant de Porte"—or "Le Haut d'un Battant de Porte," to give it its full title—is a copper which contains nothing whatever but the representation of the panel of wood with four dead birds nailed on to it—"un corbeau," says M. Béraldi, rightly particularizing, "un moyen-duc, entre les deux un oreillard, et au dessous un épervier." This is the one piece which, whatever else he accepts or refuses, the Collector of any representative group of Bracquemond's plates is obliged to possess. In regard to others, there are alternatives: if you have *that*, you are not bound to have this, and so on. The little "Corbeau" takes the place of the little "Canard," for

instance; or, amongst bird-pieces which, unlike these, introduce, behind and around the objects of their especial portraiture, the charm of Landscape, "L'Etang" may take the place of "Perdrix" or of "Un Rappel de Perdrix"—it does not greatly matter; but it does matter that the Collector annex (and in a State early enough to carry its true date "1852," and not the second date, much later substituted) "Le Haut d'un Battant de Porte." For it is the greatest of Bracquemond's bird-pieces and of all Bracquemond's original pieces; and this although the action of the birds, so interesting in several other prints, is necessarily absent. The superb drawing, light and shade, and representation of texture—almost of colour—ensure it the first place.

This is a volume in which Etchings not original—Etchings devoted by the artist to the translation of the art of another—find mention only incidentally. Not to have made that rule in writing it would have exposed me to difficulties not only endless, but superfluous: for, in a reproductive etching, however able, Whose mind is it that you are studying, and whose work? Well, the mind mainly of the creator—not the interpreter—and even mainly, also, the creator's work. Incidentally, however, in dealing with an original etcher, and the etcher one of great merit, it becomes advisable to refer to that other field in which it happens that his art has been greatly exercised. The larger number, no doubt, of Félix Bracquemond's plates are concerned with the execution of conceptions not his; and, of them all, it may be there is only one that we need speak of. This is the place in which to say, then, that in 1863—eleven years after the production of the "Battant de Porte"—there was produced by Bracquemond his "Erasmus, after Holbein." It was refused at that year's Salon, but shown at the following one. The picture itself



LE HAUT D'UN BATTANT DE PORTE

—the grave student, seen in profile at his desk, with "son petit coin de tapisserie" behind him, as Philippe Burty said to me, thinking of his own—was long (may one say it?) the austere ornament of the "Salon carré" of the Louvre. Now were there ever a "Salon carré" for reproductive engraving, Bracquemond's version of that Louvre "Erasmus" would adorn it without a doubt.

Among Landscape pieces proper—not forgetting the group of prints which record Bracquemond's familiarity with and fondness for the River by Sèvres and Bas Meudon, such as that subtle one "Le Pêcheur et les Deux Enfants"—there should be named particularly, perhaps, and especially for the brilliant success of their effects of sky, and of atmosphere generally, the "Nuée d'Orage" and the "Pont des Saints Pères." Impossible to be more spirited, or more closely observant than Bracquemond showed himself here—though still for subtle excellence "Le Pêcheur et les Deux Enfants" bears the palm. After the landscapes, there must be taken into account those etchings for the decoration of ceramics which show us Bracquemond as an inventive ornamentist. Etching and Engraving had not in Bracquemond's earlier and middle years been sufficiently remunerative, and he had been induced to become associated, or he had desired even from the artistic point of view to become associated, with M. Deck and then with Sèvres and also with M. Haviland at Limoges. Hence these etched exercises in Ornament —good in their own way, but things in no sense comparable with prints which, as it happens, will fall under our notice in the next chapter—Jules Jacquemart's records of porcelain, so delicate, so brilliant.

Thirty years after the great and faithful study of those dead birds, splendid in plumage and texture, in the "Battant de Porte," Bracquemond—responding, I believe,

on this occasion to an invitation from the Dowdeswells, and having in the long interval been occupied, as we have seen to some extent, with so much else, so many themes, and so successfully—returned to a bird subject, with a plate devoted to one bird and nothing besides, and that was "Le Vieux Coq." That has been a favourite Bracquemond—a favourite Bracquemond even here in England. It is a Bracquemond of the later manner; wrought with unusual and very visible completeness and elaboration: a very Hondecoeter in the art of Black and White—and yet that comparison, one feels as one makes it, does not hold good altogether, because while Hondecoeter represented an individual, this or that cock in particular, seized, transferred to the canvas, Bracquemond summed up in the one etching the *type* cock, and did it finally. It was his farewell, surely, to that subject—to that kind of subject—for ever. There were two hundred impressions of it: all in the same State, I think. The number, although smaller perhaps than that of the average edition of this Etcher's most acceptable pieces, is, it may be noted, very much larger than the average number of impressions good and desirable. Often the plates of Bracquemond have passed at too early a stage out of his own, or any capable hands; so that the early States, the fine impressions, are habitually very rare—rare enough, it is certain, to afford ample opportunity for rise in money value.

Let our last word upon the veteran Etcher whom that impressive master, Alphonse Legros, and no one else, seeing that Haden is dead, still has for a contemporary, be a citation of words which Burty, who frequented his etching-room and who amassed his work, was as long ago as 1878 enabled to write. The pieces, Burty tells us, that compose the *Œuvre*, are "energiques, personnelles, bien françaises—j'entends ingénument savantes, et libres sans exaggération."

CHAPTER VIII

JACQUEMART

WHEN the English print and picture lover understands that Still Life is something more than a mere copy of a natural object or of an object of Art—that noble Still Life involves a personal, almost a creative, vision of the thing portrayed and loved—Jules Jacquemart will enjoy a measure of appreciation which up to the present he has not here received.

Of course Jacquemart did not confine himself to the interpretation, in Etching, of finely wrought helmet, the scabbard of the sword, the carved Renaissance mirror-frame, the porcelain cup, the great plain bowl of unctuous jade, and the rock-crystal vase; and those who enter little into the secrets of that artistry which enabled Jacquemart to make his Still-Life objects, flooded with atmosphere, a real and a companionable and an enchanting presence, are yet ready to welcome his skill as an interpreter of pictures. His small-scale records of the suave Greuze, or the impetuous Fragonard, or Vermeer occupied with character and illumination (the reproduction of Mrs. Joseph's "The Soldier and the Laughing Girl" reaches the high-water mark of reproductive Etching)—these strike the eye agreeably on the first view, and, on the twentieth, confirm irrevocably their appeal. Yet they are not so wonderful, and in their method not so wholly individual, as are the plates of *L'Histoire de la Porcelaine* and of the *Gemmes et Joyaux de la Couronne*, to which Gonse, I

think, and our regretted Hamerton were the first to do conspicuous justice, and which Sir Francis Seymour Haden always acclaimed, and which, immediately on Jacquemart's early death, were praised and studied in *The Nineteenth Century*, in an essay of my own, written in youth, or almost youth, not long after I had been similarly occupied with the understanding and eulogy of Méryon.

And though, as has been seen, Jacquemart did other things than Still-Life visions—and did them learnedly and brilliantly—it certainly is one of the characteristics to be remembered of him, that, in the main, to Still Life was he devoted. He was concerned, that is, habitually—though far from always—with an order of theme that several times (but only several times) occupied Hollar—and, best of all, in the "Five Muffs"; that occupied once Rembrandt, whose "Damier"—a marked shell—is in its own way unsurpassable; that occupied once Whistler, in an early but quite perfect little piece, "The Wine Glass."

Jacquemart's devotion to Still Life, and more especially to that department of it which includes bold or exquisite handicraft, had its first source, no doubt, in the fact that his father was a collector and a connoisseur. What more natural than that when Albert Jacquemart set out to write his History of Porcelain, Jules should set out to illustrate it? The book is one of the most beautiful volumes issued by Techener's house. Scarcely is there a print in it that is not worth having, though the finished engraver's proofs are things to be yet more sought for. Techener's issue of the later work, the *Gemmes et Joyaux de la Couronne*, makes a more stately portfolio, and witnesses to Jacquemart's acquisition, by that time, of a more masculine art. The scale is larger, the objects

COUPE DE JASPE ORIENTALE

JACQUEMART

themselves are larger, generally speaking; but that of itself does not quite account for the change of vision and handling. Jacquemart had developed. He had progressed. Likewise—and almost of necessity—he had left something behind. I cannot class myself with those—nor do I know that they are in a majority—whose admiration is reserved for the later work. Jacquemart was a sensitive artist—to be appropriate in method he knew how to be flexible. He knew, of course, that the method that had rendered every quality of Sèvres, or of Vincennes, was not adapted to disclose the beauty of great vessels of porphyry or jade. None the less is it doubtless a fortunate thing that it was in his younger years that he addressed himself to delicate porcelain, and that in those of his quickly reached maturity he turned to the interpretation of the great *objets d'Art* in the Galerie d'Apollon at the Louvre. The earlier work one singles out for self-evident delicacy—for a draughtsmanship precise, dainty: always, in its restrained and greatly controlled way, significant and expressive. The later work one singles out rather for richness, force and breadth, for economy of means, for a treatment of its motive sometimes seemingly even summary, though always at bottom as well considered as in execution it is decisive. Jacquemart's interpretation of these ancient and these Renaissance things is, more than anything else, charged, it seems to me, with the revelation of the dignity and character of actual matter. It is in this way that Chardin would have etched; and Jacquemart's later, larger etchings have affinity with Chardin's Still-Life canvases.

Certain plates of the *Histoire de la Porcelaine* were begun in 1860. In 1862 Techener published the volume; and little more than two years later came the *Gemmes et Joyaux de la Couronne*, of which in the first instance the

Chalcographie of the Louvre undertook the publication. Techener issued it afterwards, and in his hands due regard was paid to the printing of every impression. There are sixty plates in the Series, which vary from the coarseness of rough wood in the "Salière de Troyes" to the signet's flatness and delicate smoothness—"C'est le sinet du Roi, Sant Louis"—and to the interpretation of the red porphyry, flaked, as it were, and speckled, of an ancient vase. He saw these things—these worthy things, and admirable—he kept, in his interpretation of them, their fire and life. These things sat to him for their portraits. He posed them; he composed them. The air finely environed them, and they were played on by the light of noble weather.

Born in 1837, Jules Jacquemart lived only till 1880. Strong always in his work, in physical constitution he lacked staying power. *La phtisie laryngée* fixed upon him for its prey, and he did not elude it by passing into the South in winter, and eking out his life amid the steady palms and the grey olives and the shimmering eucalyptus of the *Côte d'azur* at Menton, his "*tombe fleurie.*"

Jacquemart left something of a Still-Life School. People like Courtry and Le Rat and Greux, who, besides doing much other work, worthy entirely of excellent craftsmen, contributed quite admirable plates to Holloway's portfolio, *Works of Art in the Collections of England*, carried on, later than himself, Jacquemart's traditions; and somewhere or other I have seen a certain *aiguière*—the interpretation of it by that erratic and often, as it were, too garrulous artist, Félix Buhot—which, even with its commendable and complete freedom, reveals affinity with the path-breaking labours and the brilliant successes of Jules Jacquemart. Producing Still-Life pieces so many and so varied, where predecessors greater

in some respects, it may be, produced so few, Jacquemart retains, and of necessity to a remote period, his own place. To the enchanted land of his election he made no chance visit. He knew it was the land that called him clearly. He came, and there abode.

CHAPTER IX

LEGROS

WRITTEN upon the later impressions of Legros's engraved portrait of M. Poulet-Malassis—a sometime man of letters, and sometime publisher of volumes which were issued from a printing press in Brussels, and one who himself was "grave" but intermittently—there is given to us this epigrammatic counsel, "Il faut toujours garder sa gravité avec les sots." Legros himself has not—as I opine—been thrown much into the society of "les sots": it is elsewhere that, without lapse or backsliding, his "gravity" has been preserved—preserved in the practice, during fifty years, of his noble and enduring art.

More than thirty years since, that same M. Poulet-Malassis, in collaboration with M. Thibaudeau—one of the most charming and accomplished print-sellers of the last generation—made a Catalogue of Legros's Etchings, which numbered, at that date, One Hundred and Sixty-eight. But there will be more than five hundred to be catalogued when the complete record comes, in due course, to be undertaken. Legros's labour is finished—but it was finished not so long ago. "1855" is the date of the veteran's first Etching, and the date of the last is in the opening years of our present Century. In a period so extended, there must—the reader will surmise—have been many changes: he will surmise too—and correctly—that there has been a great variety of endeavour. Yes, indeed;

but in the case of this austere and ever-dignified artist—a man who has held to his own course as completely as did Ingres, or Degas, or the great Puvis de Chavannes—the changes brought about by time or circumstance have but extended and developed the individuality of the worker; and even the variety of theme has been a variety on very definite lines, whose course, whose limitations, could have been foreseen and predicted from a study of Legros's productions made when Malassis and Thibaudeau first wrote. For the Hundred and Sixty-eight prints of M. Legros's, already existing in 1877, comprised instances of his every mood and every effort. It included even certain deeply interesting manifestations of a mood and phase that have not reappeared. By 1877, the weird, grim side at least of an imagination destined long to remain powerful, was a side that had vanished. It is the first that we will here examine.

Fifty years ago, Charles Baudelaire translated into French the ingenious and uncanny brief fictions of Edgar Allan Poe. Under the impression produced by them, it pleased the young Legros, in 1861, to execute several etchings, the themes of which were Poe's stories. "Le Chat Noir," "La Vérité sur le Cas de M. Waldemar," and "Le Scarabée d'Or" are among the chief of these prints. They are as weird as Poe himself—but they do not owe to him their weirdness. The Legros of that date had found in a strange man of letters a personality with which he was akin—the imagination of another into which he could sympathetically enter. But his own first exhibition of a weird, grim realism had been made a full year earlier, with his "Procession dans les Caveaux de Saint Médard," and in "Les Chantres Espagnols" there was added to all that, a little later, the high poetry which is just as true and as essential a part of Legros's nature. This "Chantres Espagnols," in a happily chosen impres-

sion of it, is seen as nothing less than a most noble, an "epoch-making" plate. Its inspiration has never been surpassed. The subject is expressed by just those precise, rigid, austere methods of the period which, as it happens, best fit it. In fact, the subject and the method are fused into one. It has weirdness, of course. In one or two types of singing men, in that long row, there is the extreme of senile incapacity, both of feeling and intelligence. An aged imbecility is disclosed in dull eye and dropped jaw. We are on the edge of a grave. But there are other types, of years less protracted, and of years better spent—types of restrained tenderness and dignified reserve. And —in a fine proof—the impressiveness of the lighting of the picture is almost as great as that of its record of human individuality and loneliness. Here is mere physical nearness and a common pursuit—the service daily repeated and the old men comrades. But how few of these natures have ever really come together, and what a history has each!

A study of character less intimate, but a print of maintained dignity and noble line, is "Communion dans l'Eglise St. Médard"—the administration of the sacrament at the sharply illumined altar of the very church whose subterranean regions a print mentioned earlier illustrates. Nor before we pass from this profoundly personal section of Legros's artistic labour—a section which reveals so much the basis of his temperament, now sad and now aspiring, now grim, now tender, now concerned with noble, unpopular beauty—must there be forgotten the few prints that illustrate, sometimes with a conception Dürer-like in its intensity, sometimes with vision Rembrandt-like in its tenderness—the with us not too well known legend of *Le Bonhomme Misère.* These are "Le Voleur de Poires," "La Mort dans le Poirier," and the rare and touching piece which brings before us the visit

of St. Peter and St. Paul to the Bonhomme Misère's abode.

This last-named plate is one of many which disclose Legros's preoccupation with the fortunes of the poor. Never a sentimentalist, and never, from the high platform or pulpit of his art, preacher of an impossible Socialism, Legros, like Steinlen, sympathizes with, and with intelligent cordiality illustrates, the labour of the least privileged, the material sorrows of the needy and the old. Nor perhaps is Legros, any more than Steinlen, particularly anxious to be assured, before they are given his sympathy, that his poor folk, his aged failures, have invariably been well behaved. I apprehend that Unjust as well as Just come in for a share of his pity. The great plate, "La Mort du Vagabond"—which, in the eyes of the Collector, has nothing whatever against it but the sheer necessity of framing it (it is too large for any Solander-box that the Collector could conveniently handle)—this plate, I would say, which represents a dying wayfarer, couched near a bent tree that wind and rain-storm tear through, is type, or final expression, of Legros's leaning towards the theme of the human derelict.

The gravity and tenderness that have permitted this attitude have added much quality to his Portraiture, and have also, it is conceivable, limited its range. Legros is not the etcher of the elegant woman: he and M. Helleu live not so much in different worlds as in different solar systems. Legros in portraiture is the etcher, *par excellence*, in our day, of serious, thought-laden faces, with more of "record" than of "promise"—it is now the austere visage of that alert ecclesiastic, that diplomatist of the Church, Manning: it is now the tranquil and reflective face of a painter who was thinker above everything—the dignified, sincere, and simple face of G. F. Watts. And often, of

course, in his single figure-studies of unnamed men—it may be "Le Géographe," seated before his table, immersed in study, with a globe at his right hand: it may be "Le Joueur de Viole" or "Le Joueur de Contrebasse," with the instruments that are theirs, playing a part in the composition—half of the interest of the representation is the interest of Portraiture: the study of a character, an individuality's charm. That, and a profound grim realism, belongs too to such a subject as the "Leçon de Phrénologie: No. 2"—a most rare early plate, in which, in the lecture-theatre or class-room of some College, a robed Professor discourses, with bare skulls before him, to a small, picked audience of attentive, mature men.

Most, though not all, of the pieces that have thus far been mentioned had been wrought when Poulet-Malassis and Thibaudeau catalogued. Then, too, a few landscapes had been wrought; but these—such as the "Paysage aux Meules"—were but the tentative approach and introduction to the great series of landscapes which are the outstanding feature in Legros's later and, in some ways, most beautiful work. Legros's pure Landscape is that of a Classic in his Art: it is sure of remaining: it is individual: it can be but ineffectually imitated: its place is unassailed. By it alone—had he produced nothing else—by it alone he would be great. Its method is based a little upon certain landscape drawings of the riper but not decadent Italian masters. Like the finest art in Landscape usually, it does not approach topography. It selects, alters, heightens, simplifies. The motive of each piece is independent of quite local restrictions; and the individual is so treated that for the most part he has become a type. No print, except, I think, "Près d'Amiens: les Tourbières"—a vision of peat marshes and poplars—and one or two others, bears any place's name. Habitu-

LE MUR DU PRESBYTÈRE

LEGROS

ally it is "Le Pêcheur à la truble"—but bending over what stream? It is "Le Mur du Presbytère"; but of what priest's house, and in what Department? It is "Le Pré ensoleillé," but in what country-side?

Two districts in particular have furnished motives for these placid, these serene visions of Landscape, in workmanship so delicate, in effect so broad, in charm of such a varied suavity. The Boulognais: sometimes the low-lying parts of it—the dune and meadow—but, oftener, its background of chalk-hills—and Burgundy, those central, higher, sun-swept uplands of which the etcher's birthplace, the noble Burgundian capital, is itself the centre—these are the wells from which he has drawn inspiration. These, and the art of great dead masters, and the imagination which is his own—the land that rises in the mind of poet and creative draughtsman, to which Dr. Lunn can organize no tours, and Mr. Cook can issue no excursion tickets. Beauty and dignity of form, the passage of weather, the rustle of air-touched leafage, the gentle flow of some almost secret stream, and then the great lines of a wide-stretching country, and a perspective vast as that of Rembrandt's "Goldweigher's Field"—these, and no local accuracy, but these understood with all a poet's and great artist's depth, make the charm, irresistible and lasting, of Legros's etched Landscape.

The impressions of Legros's earlier pieces are of extreme rarity and of interesting value. The impressions taken, of most of the subjects of the middle and the later time, may not be particularly numerous, but they are numerous enough to include many examples of a quality the Collector should shun. It is alone in those impressions that are carefully chosen that the intention of the artist is beheld; that his vision seems to be of surprising dignity, his technical skill acknowledged, and his poetry felt.

CHAPTER X

OTHER ARTISTS OF THE FRENCH REVIVAL

IT is in Cadart's publications of French Etchings—modern, of course, but of some forty years ago—that probably the greater part of Appian's etchings appeared; though one or two of them were issued in the South or in South Central France, from which most frequently the subjects of Appian's work were taken. The 'Sixties and the 'Seventies of the last century saw his most engaging pieces. As a painter, Appian was creditable, agreeable, but never "epoch-making." To use that last phrase, even of his Etchings, would be to say too much for them; but the etchings have an individuality, an accomplishment definite and charming. They are sterling things—quite his own things—and Collectors do well to rescue them, when they can, from the not disgraceful, but very commonplace company in which, of necessity no doubt, Cadart from time to time put them. Appian's place—like Veyrassat's—may not be a great one, but, like Veyrassat's, it is a place distinctly: his work survives to fill it.

Appian etched Landscape—Landscape, Light and Distance. People—except as landscape figures excellently stationed—fill no important function in his work. Sometimes they may be absent from his plates altogether. What is seldom absent is Architecture—and that reminds us of Humanity: assures us we are in an inhabited and civilized world. Sometimes the building, in an Etching of Appian's, is a fort; a gleaming sunlit tower. Sometimes

AUX ENVIRONS DE MONACO

APPIAN

it may be a Riviera villa: sometimes a wall—is it Roman, or French with the stability of Rome—a construction of the department of the "Ponts et Chaussées"? That does not much matter. It gives, as in "Le Village de Chanoz, Savoie," a great line: it binds the landscape together: it helps to compose it. "Un Rocher dans les Communaux de Rix" shows, not man's building, but something of the structure and building of the world. And whether in Savoy, or in the Ain—that southern corner of Burgundy that abuts upon Geneva—or in the Alpes Maritimes, or in the little principality embedded in the territory of France, the Landscape of Appian, with his introduction of Architecture and his sense of natural construction besides, has always dignity—dignity and quietude—the repose that comes with breadth and no lack of precision. "Aux Environs de Menton"—the shaded Southern shore, with lateral sunlight piercing here and there the foliage, and striking full on the exposed white fort that stands out to the sea—"Aux Environs de Menton" is an instance of that dignity and rest: its dignity and quietness are the elements of its charm. And delicately, observantly recorded are Appian's skies: in "Avant l'orage, près Monaco," especially, is all the menace of electricity-charged air.

Veyrassat, like Appian, was a painter of mark. As a painter, he is more certain than Appian is to last. He had, in a sense, his specialty. It was a wide landscape, of Central France, generally. There were two or three horses in it. One of the two or three was always a white horse, or a horse whose greyness looked nearly white against the bay by his side. They were large cart-horses. Some people would narrow down the specialty of Veyrassat to the white horse alone—but that would be to misconceive him. No: with the white horse there must be a horse not white.

And there must be the landscape: the open country with a wide horizon. If the horses are not crossing a ferry, or being led to a horse fair, or to a forge in the village, a ploughboy must be astride of one of them. Or it may be they are yoked together in the fields—and the day goes slowly on.

This theme, these themes, of Veyrassat's oil pictures are the themes of his delightful little prints. His prints, when they are delightful, are invariably small. Once or twice he executed plates of average size: in these he lost distinction, and joined the ranks of mediocrity. But he joined them only to leave them. He returned to his small, his sometimes actually tiny plates—plates few of which were larger than a Sebald Beham—and in them reasserted his individuality: highly finished though they were, they were quite broad in effect. Perfect unity belonged to each piece: each piece was a lyric of the country—a record beautiful and real.

I have no reason to suppose that Veyrassat executed many etchings. I am the possessor of a little Set—I wish I could say, in what I believe to have been its original state or form, in a *cahier*, like the *cahier* of the earlier Dutch prints by Jongkind: but that is not my good fortune. Still, they are brilliant little performances: entirely sterling. Others are known, outside that Set. And nothing is worthier to be known favourably than the little plate that appeared in Hamerton's *Etching and Etchers*—the First Edition—1868. It is called "Boat Horses," and is a perfect picture of the serene, wide country and its leisurely labour.

It may seem strange to say it; but I think that Whistler—taken in the mood that he was in when working at his smaller Chelsea and smaller Paris subjects—would have put his name with satisfaction to these things of Vey-

rassat's: some of the most distinguished *croquis* wrought in all the years since men have etched.

In that third quarter of the Nineteenth Century, which saw so much good Etching, there laboured prolifically, in the medium with which we are concerned, Maxime Lalanne—barely a middle-aged man when Hamerton, in 1868, so much appreciated him. In 1905—all but twenty years after Lalanne's death—Mr. Richard Gutekunst paid tribute to his memory—made of his etched work an Exhibition of greater importance than work of Lalanne's had previously enjoyed. Reckoning the very minor pieces and about thirty translations from the oil pictures of earlier artists and from Lalanne's contemporaries—these included most brilliantly successful little transcripts from Troyon and from Ribot—there were all but Two Hundred pieces in the Show. It justified, in great measure, the appreciation it received, and it made probable for Lalanne a lasting place in the regard of English amateurs. The success was not to be wondered at. This delicate draughtsman and fine Etcher is of those men who never offered to the Public what was entirely beyond the Public's capacity to receive. Who can say that a vision of the world so graceful as Lalanne's was not Lalanne's own? Yet who can say but that that vision—always a little in advance of the current one—did not keep still within measurable distance of that of the average person of good taste? There was no gulf to bridge. Lalanne realized an ideal not quite beyond the grasp of refined amateurs of the art in which this etcher was expert.

What Mr. Hamerton used to insist upon so strongly was Lalanne's possession of qualities of grace. Where his themes and performances soar above the ordinary, it is by quality of grace—generally—that they do soar. I

do not know that Lalanne was anxiously concerned to be graceful—I should say he was graceful spontaneously. Further, it must be set to his credit that his grace never banished reality: he was never too graceful for the chosen place and the particular hour. His tree-drawing was grace itself. Lalanne made everything in woodland scenery as graceful as Cotman made the ash tree and the willow. There is quite consummate grace in the piece which Mr. Gutekunst put, I do not mean upon the cover, but on the first actual page of his Exhibition Catalogue. In disposition of subject and in touch, there is almost more than grace there: there is high distinction. And what pretty vivacity, with the permissible elegance, in Lalanne's "Fribourg"! Then again, is not "Richmond" just his theme? And if he had not chanced to make a transcript of the "Mantes" of Corot, would he not have etched "Mantes la jolie" on his own account? Much of his work is charming. Much of it, it must be said also, is accomplished commonplace. In one plate he succeeds profoundly in a theme not very visibly his own: and that is the smallish, most admirable print, a "Conflagration dans le Port de Bordeaux." You are looking along the house-surrounded basins, and they are full of large craft, and ablaze, and the illumination of the fire flickers or lies in sheets of light upon the walls and windows of the quay-side houses; and on the burning ships, just as you look, there is a crackle, and an outburst of new fury. The piece, for one so intricate, is curiously "united," and in its studied completeness no vividness is lost.

Théodule Ribot, one of the leading lights of *la bonne Peinture* during the Second Empire—and a light that is not to be extinguished—has thus far been named but incidentally. It has been chronicled that among Maxime

CONFLAGRATION DANS LE PORT DE BORDEAUX

LALANNE

Lalanne's not very frequent translations from his contemporaries, there is a plate after Ribot. By its subject, it might have been from Charles Jacque. Ribot's work lay generally in other directions than that of farmyard themes. His Religious paintings—his Good Samaritans and St. Sebastians—have dignity and quality. His Portraiture reveals strange souls. They fascinate you, whether you will or no—hags of immovable determination; sometimes the austere guardians of a flower-like child: sometimes self-centred altogether—potential sorceresses, or worse—aged *déséquilibrées*, whom you never desire to remember, and can never hope to forget. Then there is his domestic Genre, in which perhaps a girl, with the grace of fourteen years, shares supper with a devoted dog, or pores absorbed over a *livre des images;* and the Genre, not quite domestic, in which, with nothing less than Chardin's power, Théodule Ribot depicts (sometimes surrounded with the Still Life of meat or fowl or fruit) cooks, scullions, little white-aproned boys—the *petits gâte-sauces* of the French kitchen.

A painter sober and sympathetic, brilliant and decisive, indubitably great, Ribot was likewise, within the limits of his choice, an excellent Etcher. Some of the themes that have been indicated he treated in Etching—some of them only; but what he treated he treated with convincing reality. Only one of his prints makes any pretence to be a *sujet pieux*, and that—a little procession of convent-taught girl-children—is chosen, obviously, because Ribot liked children, and revelled, as Legros did in his earlier etchings, in violent and rich effects of light and shade. But, as a rule, light and shade—a preoccupation with Ribot in Painting, whether he dealt with good Samaritans, old women with the evil eye, serene sedate children, or vast green pears from Anjou—concerned him

scarcely at all in Etching, in which what he sought was Line, Character, Action. One piece presents a *chef*, giving his lesson. Another, the criticism of a spoilt dish. Another, "les éplucheurs." Another, an assembly of little cooks. All are life-like. A dozen or sixteen prints, and the tale of Ribot's Etching is finished. Reference should not be omitted to his complete and masterly studies of the heads of elderly men of weight.

Ribot's publisher—the publisher of most of the artists I have thus far in this chapter spoken of—was Cadart, who encouraged Original Engraving, in the 'Sixties and the early 'Seventies. The actual Ribot plates, one may suppose, exist no longer; and of the prints I believe there is no store of importance at any dealer's. They are scattered about. A few are cherished in the hands of good Collectors—whither, because of the excellence of Ribot's work, his clear and potent individuality, his unrelaxed grip of his theme, his depth, and his occasional gladsomeness, it should be the tendency of the rest to gravitate. To ignore him would be ridiculous.

Félix Buhot was an Etcher of very genuine qualities—vivacious, energetic, flexible—as to whom, after a careful survey of his abundant and his various work, one is a little inclined to ask oneself why it is that one has not admired more warmly; for, certainly, an obvious talent was not wanting to him. It may be that through all this readiness, this almost universality of interest—interest in town and country, in weather, movement, lasting form—which his work evidences, there peeps out, also, evidence of the superficial—of the lack of an attention continuous and penetrating—some suggestion of a slightness of nature and of a temperament insufficiently individual to be greatly impressive. Much of his work has the air of

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an impromptu: for the impromptu Buhot was wonderfully equipped; but the slightness, perhaps even the readiness, ends by a little palling on you. It is, in short, illustrated journalism—or has the virtues and defects of such.

No one more than Buhot has given reins to facility. Restraint is not his affair. His restless joy in doing something—anything—betrays itself in margin after margin: endless, and often, I think, discordant, as well as irrelevant, are what is known as his "remarques"—those silly little "side-shows," may I call them, to which an artist of the faultless taste of Whistler reasonably objected.

For all that, the fact cannot fairly be lost sight of that Félix Buhot was a most clever draughtsman. The splendid, the extremely beautiful, the exquisite, he never rose to—unless indeed in a certain small transcript of an "Aiguière en Cristal de Roche" which has almost the opulence and the decision, and the trembling indecision, of a Jacquemart.

But "Les Grandes Chaumières"—a fine, skilled country landscape—may be called up to prove that Buhot could on occasion be reticent and self-suppressing, and in no way even suggest a lack of dignity. And "La Messe de Minuit," in part by the characterization he has given to the figures in the assembled outdoor crowd, shows also qualities, real qualities, which he undoubtedly possessed, and which must be done justice to. And yet the verdict as a whole cannot be altered: Buhot habitually was not much else than a smart, lively sketcher, living *au jour le jour*.

A sketcher—but a sketcher of what extraordinary certainty and brilliance!—was Barthold Jongkind, who was of Dutch birth, but of French practice. He came quite early from the Low Countries. Little tuition seemed

to be needed to furnish him with certain hand, and power of accurate draughtsmanship, and in the early 'Sixties of last century he came to Paris, to draw in Water Colour and to paint. A *Cahier* of Six Etchings, that appeared not long afterwards, shows that Dutch landscape was the theme of his first prints. Soon afterwards he settled at Honfleur: became associated with Boudin—then slowly gathering the materials for his achievements and his fame as painter of the Channel coasts and skies and seas. To live there, in the Baie de Seine, and tackle no marine subjects, would have been impossible—one may suppose—to anyone but Troyon. Jongkind addressed himself to the landscape of the coast, as well as of the country; and, on a rather larger scale than his Dutch Etchings—which are economical indications generally, with Rembrandt's "Six's Bridge" as their forerunner and exemplar—he executed a few plates of Honfleur scenes of every day: the coming and the going of various craft about the roadstead, and the port, already decaying.

These, or the two best of them—the Arrival and Departure, published by Cadart in Paris—are better than five things out of six in the *Cahier*. They grapple more closely with difficulties, and they surmount them. The *Cahier* pieces are desirable; but more desirable—with one or two exceptions—are these later ones, suggested by the little Norman port. And more desirable still is one, at least, wrought subsequently, when Jongkind went into the Low Countries again; etched a skating-piece called "Batavia"; and—this is the plate I would insist upon—etched the river-front of Antwerp from across the waters of the Scheldt. This "Anvers," still admirably dexterous in its economy of labour, goes further in expressiveness—it seems to me—than any other of Jongkind's not very numerous coppers. The water lives, and

the sky palpitates with light. This plate, and two or three that I mentioned before getting to it, should be in the hands of as many Collectors as possible.

Jongkind, in Painting as in Etching, was greatest, not in his quite early, but in his early middle time. He was a strange personality. Boudin, who one year, among the first of the 'Seventies, went with him from France to Rotterdam, admired him warmly, thought of him amiably —looked forward to the time when in Jongkind's art-work "the flavour of the fruit would be appreciated—beneath the rind, a little rough." The time has come when it is shown that there was truth in the great Boudin's friendly prophecy. But Jongkind is now gone. His middle days were embittered, through want of wide appreciation. His old age was reckless. In it he painted but in second-rate fashion, and did not etch at all. *Cherchez la femme!* Jongkind had retired into the South—to the Department of Isère, to the hill-sides near Grenoble—he died there but a few years since, a genius and a *détraqué*.

A leader of French Art, even more influential than Jongkind, and one about whose work, for longer years, a fiercer battle waged—I mean Edouard Manet—engraved a moderate number of plates which cannot cease to interest the student, but which are not of a nature to have much effect upon his now surely established fame. M. Moreau-Nélaton has catalogued them, with his Lithographs. In his lifetime they were little known : only the most restricted circulation having been given to them. Since his death they have been published in a limited edition by M. Strölin. They include two versions of the naked "Olympia"—of the picture, or of the idea of the picture, now at the Louvre—and from one point of view or another they are refreshing reminders of the pronounced artistic personality

of Manet; but they would scarcely claim to be conspicuous triumphs of the art of Etching. Placed before a copper, Manet was not at a loss to convey to us his impression: he knew enough of the *métier* to *se tirer d'affaire*. But, exactly as I shall have to find in the next chapter was the case with Corot, Manet, in presence of a plate, was simply bound to leave too much of the equipment of his art behind him. His penetration he had, and his decision: certainly his insight found expression in the firmness of his touch. But he wanted a palette and brushes and a canvas, to give justly and at once the "values"—to find the different planes expressed with large precision, almost before he knew it—and to endow his subject with what sane men recognize as the manly and unfailing charm of his flowing paint.

CHAPTER XI

BARBIZON ETCHERS

THE Barbizon painters, though not more than one or two of them were in the highest sense great etchers, did, most of them, from time to time, etch. Springing more or less, as they did, out of the School of the Romantics—that rather elder School that overlapped them in point of time and in point of endeavour, and with which in many ways, notwithstanding their more visible realism, they had affinity—these men were most of them, through their aims and through the circumstances of their lives, only a little in touch with the leaders of that Revival of Etching that took place in their middle and late days. Still, the link was not wanting; and these men did, in a sense and measure, contribute to that Revival.

Corot was the eldest of these Romantics and these Barbizon folk. Born in 1796, he was three score years old when the Revival was in full force, and, save Rousseau, who scarcely put needle to copper (though when he etched it was with insight and strength)—and, must we add, Daubigny, on the ground that though he etched abundantly and never actually ill, his Etching seems hardly to have remained impressive, important, or in the true line of succession—Corot appears to me to have contributed more scantily and dubiously than the rest to the great stores of fine Etching which in his latter days were being accumulated. How little of Corot's charm—of his best charm in Painting: the charm of suave distances and

shimmering trees and quiet light—did he transfer to Black and White! Of course he had no vulgar fault. He was not fussily elaborate, for example. He etched in a true etcher's spirit. Yet, is there one Corot etching—however free and elegant, and dignified even, it may be—that is not, at bottom, and on one's knowing it well, a "Corot" minus something? An etching by this master is, I always fancy, a substitute, an "understudy"—it is as if the particular personality that we appreciate and go to see, did not appear upon the stage. Somebody else instead of him—somebody with his mannerisms and only half his qualities. A little disappointing!

Charles Jacque was the next, in date of birth, of these men. He was born in 1813, and died so lately as 1894. Now any one who studies Jacque's paintings, full of life and of force, full of pictorial quality, never timid or merely tentative, will speedily settle in his own mind that here, as in the different case of Corot, there is a good deal that cannot be brought into an etching. And that is true—perfectly. Still there is a great deal more of the characteristic Jacque in a Jacque etching than of the characteristic Corot in a Corot etching. And Corot's etchings were few, and so—if for no other reason—his themes were few. But Jacque's etchings were numerous, exceedingly; and his themes are many. The etching-needle was with him a very favourite instrument. Often and often he used it but as his *Liber Veritatis*—for brief records and, for himself, sufficient memoranda of the pictures he painted. But often also he did much more with it than that. There are few of the better of his etchings—of those in which Jacque employed himself to create, or, at the very least, to translate from his own painted work with great freedom—that do not give us something that the pictures which

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in a way they may recall, give us less vividly. Action, for example. To express action is one of the especial functions of Line—and Jacque knew it. His prints range from the spirited *croquis* to the solid, complete picture—an etching still, and with no freedom, no luminousness, no unity lost. Such an one, very notably, is "La Vachère." It should be asked for in the Second State, however; for in the First the effect remains quite unattained, and in the Second, in a fine impression, it is attained absolutely.

Guiffrey has catalogued more than Four Hundred etchings by this master of picturesque and often not unclassic Naturalism, and he did not catalogue to the end. But I think no Collector need be concerned with the assembling of a vast array of them. They are not essentially different enough for that. A score probably would represent quite richly Jacque's moods, his periods, and his range. Failing the opportunity of acquiring that number of satisfactory prints—I mean sufficiently varied for the purpose—three or four at least should rest in every portfolio. The essential thing is to represent first both the slighter and sketchier and the more considered; and then two periods and two methods widely divided—to have, for instance, along with that late, beautiful dry-point, "La Vachère," such a piece of the middle or late 'Forties as "L'Escalier"—a piece of pure Etching: a rustic exterior in which Jacque shows himself to be Ostade's equal and not at all his imitator—happy, too, in adding to the truth that was Ostade's the native grace that is French.

Jean François Millet is the master of Barbizon to whose Etchings Taste in England and America has most readily turned. One cannot doubt the pleasure his not too numerous, well-considered, freely and firmly executed

prints afford: nor that it is a healthy pleasure. But the particular favour he enjoys in the world of Print-collecting is to some extent an accident, and it is high time to remind people that it is due in great measure to the extraordinary vogue of his paintings, and, further, that the extraordinary vogue of his paintings owes not a little to the acceptance of his "Angelus" as a great Religious picture—one of the few Religious pictures which, in the second half of the Nineteenth Century, have been found impressive. Certainly its design is of a noble simplicity, and Millet's momentary excursion, with it, into the realm of Sentiment, while generally he was contented with an art of Naturalism decent and genial, may at least be regarded by us as a permissible "set-off" to that account of the French peasantry which it pleased Zola to think veracious. The peasants of La Beauce and of Le Brie will not easily exhaust their claims to be idealized, after *La Terre*. Besides, Millet idealized but seldom. And if *La Terre* had never been written, and "L'Angelus" had never been put upon canvas, Millet would have been justly, though not so extravagantly, valued, for his record of the sons and daughters of the soil.

Considered technically as Etching—thought of without regard to interest or novelty of subject, and even without regard to their merits as pure draughtsmanship, for that is the stern way—Millet's prints, in execution large and open and simple, and even somewhat uniform to boot, are not to be held up to us as conspicuous instances of the triumph of this particular art. They are entirely sound: sound without finesse, sound without *tour de force*. They are able, manly, nay, even beautiful and expressive drawings on the copper—only concerned with their medium in so far as that they violate none of its laws. Their expression is personal; but their personality is

more that of the man than of the draughtsman, and more that of the draughtsman than of the Etcher.

Not the particular pieces, but the general theme and spirit of Millet's painted work, and of his pastels and other drawings, is preserved in his Etchings. One department of his art—the least known in England—is, indeed, unrepresented in the prints. This master of the roughly dressed rustic was also a master of the young nude figure; but the etchings repeat in no place the suave triumph of the drawing of "The Goose Girl." Otherwise it is the habitual Millet vision, inspired by, or resulting in, the habitual Millet thought. There is the country cottage with the woman sewing, with the mother blowing on the spoon to cool the hot draught of the baby. There is the woman standing alone to churn—the print (one of the most desirable ones) "La Baratteuse." Men go out into the wide fields, and labour until eventide. You have "Les Bêcheurs." You have also "The Gleaners." With its appropriate background, the rustic life is portrayed. There is no insistence on the old: there is no insistence on the young—indeed, the children are for the most part absent: it is only the baby who represents the new generation. The gambols of children—Millet must have felt it instinctively—the gambols of children, so pretty, and so welcome as an occasion for the display of movement and the figure, would have disturbed this grave idyll. This world of the vast tranquil fields must be peopled—and that scantily—not so much by individuals as by types: men and women able-bodied, comely of form, with features little noticeable—scarcely to be considered. The atmosphere of these pastorals may have been caught once or twice in prose fiction—not in René Bazin alone. At its finest—perhaps at its most severe—one is reminded by it of the "Michael" of Wordsworth.

With these Barbizon painters, of whose later days Time allowed him to be the witness, it is permissible to associate M. Lhermitte, who—like Bastien-Lepage at one period of his work—has something in common with them. It is not surprising that M. Lhermitte, assiduous in so many mediums, and never more successful than in work which avoids colour, should not have been able to escape the temptation to etch. A large etching by him, which I have seen at the Victoria and Albert Museum, betrays a sometimes masterly painter, as, in this instance at least, and probably not here alone, at bottom mechanical and uninspired in Etching. It would be a shock to discover that this piece is really any other than the artist's reproduction, slightly changed very possibly, of a drawing. One could believe but with difficulty that it was conceived as an etching. Of course it is capable, and even clever; but of the resources of the selected medium—of that medium's freedom and flexibility—it takes little count. If this print is representative, Lhermitte will not be collected.

CHAPTER XII

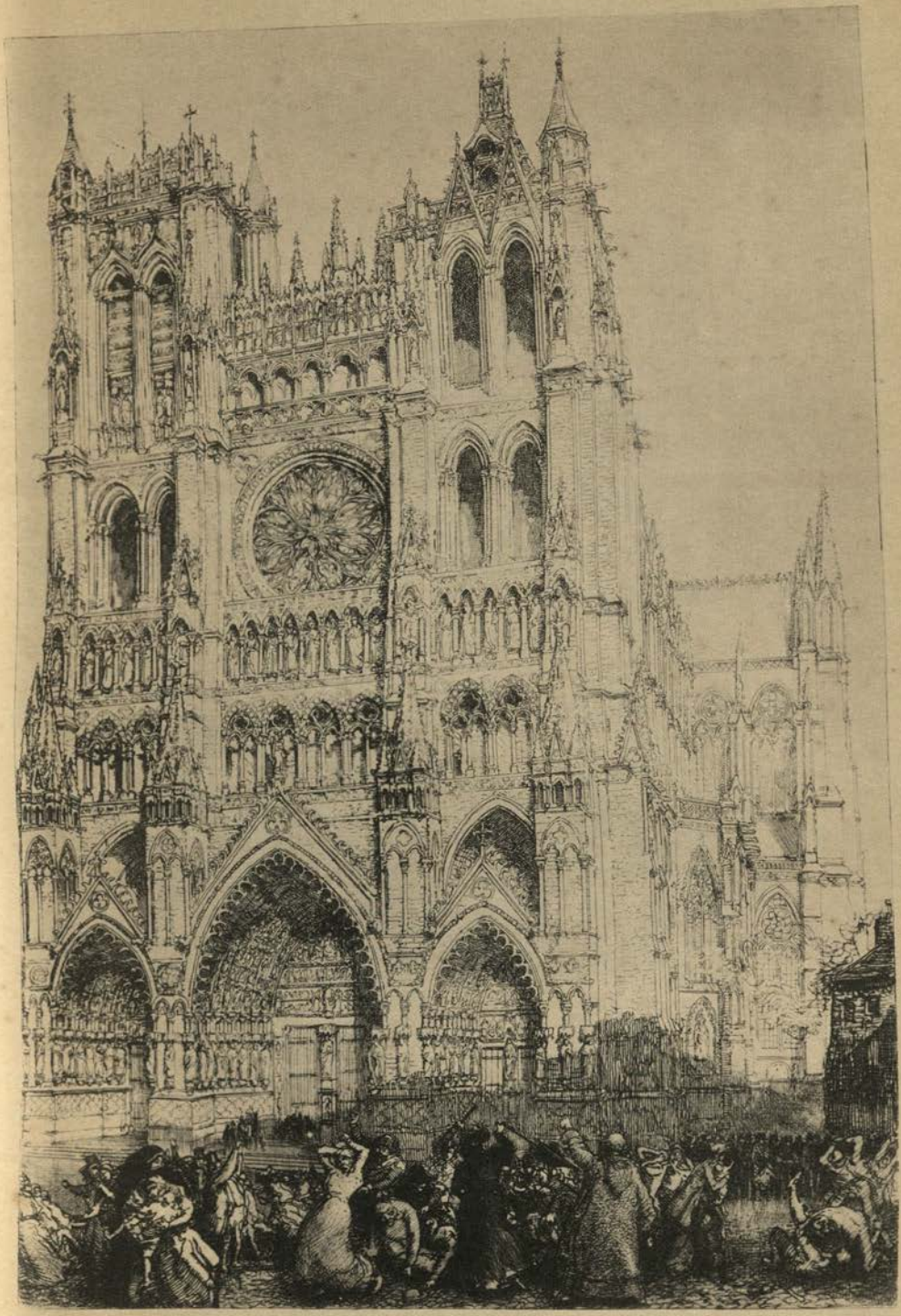
LEPÈRE AND BÉJOT

AUGUSTE LEPÈRE was known as an Original Engraver on Wood some years before he was known at all as an Etcher. A man now about sixty years old, the bulk of his work in both these arts is of necessity done, and it has made him famous; yet, since he unites with a most thorough mastery of technique—with all the technical accomplishment that should indeed belong to his years—the long-sustained, may one not say the deathless freshness of vision and of spirit which is the mark of the superior artist in Painting as in Literature—there is, of course, no knowing what surprises he holds in store for us. And that is true especially in regard to his Etching, for which he seems to have abandoned Wood Engraving. Probably Lepère would like me to add that it is true as regards Water Colour and Painting. Well—that concession may be made him: there is at least the possibility.

Here, however, no further reference is required to that which is at present somewhat tentative in Water Colour, very tentative in Paint, so that in addition to his Etching we need only keep in mind Lepère's Woodcuts; and these we keep in mind partly because they afford us interesting points of comparison with his works with the needle. And without pushing that comparison far, the general result of it may be declared in a moment. Lepère is the indisputable master of the Woodcut. No rival,

no contemporary—I should even add, no predecessor—has approached him in the force, the delicacy, the quite extraordinary variety of his employment of it, nor in the richness of pictorial invention of which he has made it the medium. That is the branch of his work which is the most interesting of all—the most remarkable. And this opinion is not wholly or at all peculiarly my own, though it is mine, firmly. M. Lotz-Brissonneau, in a carefully executed, finely produced volume, devoted to Lepère—a volume which the all-round student of the ever-energetic master does well to be familiar with—expressed that opinion. It is true that that opinion, so far as he has held it, dates from several years ago, and that in the years that have passed since it was uttered Lepère has etched much, and, along with some less desirable, has added to his Etched Work some of the very finest of his plates. Still, the position of the Woodcuts is so unique that the verdict, speaking broadly—whether M. Lotz-Brissonneau's, or mine, or another's—has no need to be reversed or modified. Paris—which, with the country, shares Auguste Lepère's interest—lives absolutely in his Woodcuts: its skies, its crowds, its architecture, its noble streets and its mean. And yet perhaps the most amazing woodcut that ever Lepère has wrought is of a scene and monument outside the capital: it is in the capital of Normandy. His "West Front of the Cathedral of Rouen" is the great masterpiece of Woodcutting. It is interesting to add that his quite recent West Front of the Cathedral of Amiens—the piece that is known as "L'Inventaire"—is a masterpiece also, and that it is one of the masterpieces of Etching.

Representative though this piece is of the later phases of Lepère as an etcher, it is representative also of Lepère's constant mind—of the mind revealed in the



AMIENS : L'INVENTAIRE

LEPÈRE

woodcuts, or in many of them: of the mind revealed in early etchings hardly less than in late. The present therefore is no inappropriate moment at which to refer to it—to it and to one or two others of the little Amiens group of which it forms a part. It is a dramatic picture. Not all its faithful and laborious study and free rendering of the elaborate architectural beauty of the Cathedral front can serve as the beginning and the end—the *raison d'être* exclusively—of this great piece. Lepère is a dramatist amongst draughtsmen. He is a lover of action and of spectacle. There are pieces even in which the suggestion is forced on you that he is never quite content unless there is something that happens. Plates there are that are restless. That it is restless cannot be said of a single one of the Amiens group; but they show, between them, energy, and the reaction from energy—peace.

Peace finds itself expressed in that little print which takes you into the country—the country in which at last the dreary suburb is lost sight of, and there is the restful line of inland waters, the quiet Somme here lingering amongst cottages and trees: a scene still dominated by the presence—a hint, in the grey distance, of the presence—never to be forgotten around Amiens: a pure and splendid presence of the stately fane: it is beheld from all those watery lowlands, as the towers of Chartres from the long-stretched uplands of the Beauce. Then, the "Vegetable Market"—or "L'Arrivée des Légumes," to give it its more significant and characteristic name—something *happening*, we see. In the low foreground the canal boats unloading their green-stuff—the day's work begun. Behind them, a *Place*, old houses, a crowded quarter of the ancient town; and above and behind this, towering not so far from us, the great Cathedral, in a silvery morn-

ing light. Used charmingly in both these pieces, the church is the main beauty of the third—which I spoke of first: "Amiens," or "The West Front"—and, again a characteristic title, "L'Inventaire." For it is the "inventory" that is the cause of the gathering of this dramatic, this *mouvementé* crowd, below the noble portals. Protesting people, and mounted soldiery to control or repress them, surge along the Place. The plate is not the work of a lover only of great Gothic architecture—it is the work of a *croyant*, for whom, when Paris or travel does not absorb him, La Vendée, the steady stronghold of old faiths, is the appropriate home.

It is the home of Lepère's choice; and many etchings—landscape pieces, but a landscape nearly always peopled—record to good effect its features of hill-side and marsh. Never, however, has the point of the artist been more alert than in one subject which his own vivacity of spirit makes cheerful: a little print—hardly more than a *croquis*, but with what a charm! —of Bruges, an open spot there, the road and the Béguinage. Then there are the Paris pieces, which, for the most part, contrast completely with such visions of peace as that afforded by the country outside Amiens. In Paris, not only in his handling of eager crowd, but in swirling water also—in sky perturbed and dramatic—is beheld Lepère's energy, and the exhibition of his most frequent mood—the adoration of spectacle, of action. I have hinted already that sometimes it goes too far. It does not go too far, but it is shown amazingly, in "Le Quartier des Gobelins," in "La Bièvre et Saint-Severin." "Le Quartier des Gobelins" —in a rare, picked impression of it, before the plate was cut down—is the impressive record of grimy quarters known to no tourist, and of the feverish activity of the

Paris that works. Almost the smoke alone would convey to one the story. A print that shows, after a dreary snowfall, the yet drearier aspect of the broad river-side road, when they are carting away the town-spoilt snow, illustrates not less well one most conspicuous quality of Lepère's—his faculty of expressing movement. And do we, to finish, want to study a curiously able treatment of difficult landscape-form, we can turn to "Carrières d'Amérique"—"d'Amérique" being the name that is borne by certain quarries outside Paris, with low-lying land in mid-distance, and then a sudden hill, flooded with rays of evening light.

We turn to Eugène Béjot, an artist as individual as Lepère, but less demonstrative. Within narrower limits than Lepère he concentrates his thought and his work. He is less eagerly productive. He is less the creator of the dramatic impromptu. Indeed, a tranquil patience attends him on his way, and, in spite of leisure, deliberation, and restriction, in full middle age—no more, for he is Lepère's junior by nearly twenty years—Béjot makes the discovery that he has produced an *œuvre*. It is to Paris—to his love of Paris—that he owes the greater part of it.

Béjot has himself expressed to me a certain indebtedness to Lepère; but what is the form of it, or the cause of it, I do not understand, for in the work of these two men, whether in the matter of vision or in the matter of handling, there is no similarity: the younger artist has no air at all of being pupil or follower of the elder. Perhaps it is only that the one owes to the other—Béjot to Lepère, as Zorn to Axel Haig—the accident of a start. A chivalrous character remembers pleasantly that degree of obligation, and very likely exaggerates it.

But I am not concerned to pretend that if the debt to Lepère is small, the debt to Méryon is great. It is, I think, a superficial judgment that sees in Béjot's art much light reflected from Méryon. The moods and calibre of these men's minds have been different: different their temperaments: though possible enough it is that Béjot's mind has been stirred sometimes to effort, as certainly to admiration, by a survey of the dozen masterpieces of the Engraver-poet: of that man of genius who slowly acquired skill, and whose own nature had in it every profundity of insight and of feeling—Méryon, with his passionate loves, his ecstasies, his radiant peace, his wholly tragic gloom. There is one point, however, at which the artist of to-day approaches the genius of two generations ago. Radiant peace they have in common—though it is Béjot who possesses by far the larger share of it—it is his in so many hours. The Paris of Béjot is habitually—not once or twice through noble effort—a cheerful, sunlit, active, happy place. Yet, of course, no single expression of that mood, so frequent with Béjot, and so agreeably characteristic, comes up, comes near to, Méryon's expression of it in the "Abside," to which there is added, as from the depths of his being, the great pictorial poet's solemn charm. We must take Béjot on his own lines.

And on his own lines Béjot is found to be charming and very various. To begin with, although Paris has most absorbed him, it has not absorbed him altogether. There exist already—and they are a recent product—two pleasant, very satisfactory little pieces, in which he has set down for us his expression of a Dutch canal, amid the flat land, under the great sky. The more visibly finished one is the piece that is likely to attract the general, for it is dainty as well as capable, and it sets forth adequately, in etcher's phrases, all that it needs to say to be fully and

by every one understood. Not in it, however, good though it is, lies the unmistakable mark of its author's originality. That lies rather—and not at all because of the presence in it of anything that connects it with his other and better-known labours—in the slighter and more simplified record, "De Leyde à Katwyck": one little, perfect note, that in its breadth and decisiveness recalls a very simple wood-block. Again, though wrought in a fashion betokening a greater research for detail, pictorial incident, the elaboration of landscape, there are especially one or two pieces dealing with the remote Parisian suburbs—the industrial quarters and the *terrain vague*, such as M. René Billotte sets down for us in Painting—and these pieces of Béjot are to be found oftenest in the course of a series of Etchings of the Parisian *arrondissements* for which the veteran Claretie wrote the text, though, here and there, there may be encountered a picked impression printed privately before the edition prepared for that Society of Bibliophiles which, if I remember rightly, financed the publication of the Series. Here, and again more lately, the purposes of Béjot have been served by the prudent, discreet introduction of patches of aquatint, which do, in certain cases, what the etched line could hardly do.

Another instance of variety of theme may be found in the plate called rightly "Montmartre," for in it the whole physical aspect of Montmartre—the high and old Montmartre—not the Montmartre of the outer Boulevard, but the Montmartre of the workshops and of the Moulin de la Galette, is embodied. It is grey and monotonous, although it is scarcely sombre. The landscape of the remote hill-side has a certain dreariness: and, nearer, a rain-shower, not to pass in a moment, falls on those squalid, everyday windows, on that roof of lead or of

zinc. Crossing Paris, and coming down towards the river, we are in the land that is richest in themes for Béjot—in the land from which he has drawn most profit. The "Montmartre" that has been spoken of was an early plate and a fine one. Half-way, perhaps, between the date of its execution and the present hour—or almost the present hour, with its "Bains Vigier" and "Le Ponton," and the records of the Pont Marie, the Pont Neuf, and the quiet quays that skirt the islands of St. Louis and of the Cité—comes a tall, upright plate—rare already—curiously excellent in composition: a piece in which the elegant height and the suave curves of a poplar tree unite into one noble design the lines and objects of the near foreground and those of the background, across the breadth of the water. That is "Saint Gervais," seen from the riverside.

It is permissible to think that Eugène Béjot's plates are, not by obvious theme alone, but especially by his own skill and feeling in this matter, associated in a degree greater than are those of Lepère with a particular place—or *the* particular place, the Paris that he loves, understands, and interprets. Sometimes, in etchings by Lepère, a quay of Paris might be a quay of Lyons or of Rouen, if not of Nantes or Saumur. A quay of Béjot's, if it is really in Paris, is, to the eye of the first comer, in Paris and nowhere else. One cannot define quite easily how it is that this comes to be, but one may guess it comes to be because Béjot is most engrossed with the place, and Lepère with the moment and the action. And if this comparison, or this conclusion, appears to be in favour of Béjot—and, in some respects, it is—let it be remembered, on the other hand, that it is not Béjot's to endow the hour and the scene with Lepère's immense vitality, that dominates and overpowers. Béjot approaches

JARDIN DU LUXEMBOURG

BÉJOT

his Paris, conscious indeed of all its present charm, conscious of the immense legacy of interest and beauty that it has received from its Past; but he approaches it in something of the spirit in which Canaletto—whose etchings I know that he admires—approached Venice: in something of the spirit in which Canaletto's pupil, that sterling English painter, Hogarth's contemporary and friend, Samuel Scott, approached London.

The touch of Béjot and his methods in the execution of a plate are eminently sane and frank. He knows his mind: he carries out his intention: never once is he the victim of fussy changefulness, of purpose immature and unformed. He is the printer of but few of his own etchings; but if on some accounts one regrets this, it is fair to remember that the laws for the printing of his etchings are laws he can clearly lay down, and laws that the intelligent printer can without difficulty respect. It is to the intelligent and docile printer that Béjot resorts. And going to him with a proof that seems to be the thing, he asks from the printer no tricky assistance and enhancement, but a simple interpretation—and gets it.

CHAPTER XIII

PAUL HELLEU

A LITTLE vexed sometimes at what appears to us the too frequent restriction of Helleu's labour to the light task—or is it really a laborious one?—of depicting the grace and the desirableness of numberless Parisiennes, with *modes* and *robes* too cleverly compounded to be ever hopelessly out of fashion, one is inclined at moments to deny Helleu his due; yet he is an artist who, with provoking faults, deficiencies, limitations of outlook, is thoroughly individual, and very often charming.

In his plates, sometimes the *défauts*—of which a certain superficiality in study of feminine character is one—seem to be more numerous than the *qualités*. But, then again, plates there are, and of all periods of M. Helleu's now long-continued labour, which to the possessor of them must be a repose and a joy. Edmond de Goncourt called them—called them *tout bonnement*—so many "snapshots at the grace of women." And the description is true, and adequate, for a good many. But here and there this artist's vision of a woman goes deeper than the snapshots. And there are delightful plates, such as the "Salon blanc," for instance, and that one of the ranged Watteau Drawings at the Louvre—plates in which women figure, but in which they are not the beginning and the end. And there are plates, again—too few, undoubtedly, but certainly memorable—in which it is the attitudes or

the faces of men, and men of character, that are vividly brought before us. There is the plate—now something like fifteen years old—depicting the brusque figure of Boudin, seen from behind, in act to sketch—hard at it—where he was sketching so often, upon the Jetty at Trouville. There is the worthy and thoroughly characteristic half-length portrait of Whistler, as he sits facing you, alert, quite impossible to catch napping. You have the suggestion of the slim figure; the hair wiry and aggressive; the veiled mouth which (as one can tell from all the lines about it) is now upon the point of giving utterance to a repartee that is already delighting its maker; and, upraised to the head, there is the hand with the curved thumb—the hand of what may seem almost exaggerated slenderness and flexibility. But No, it is the real Whistler: the Whistler gifted; the Whistler half womanly in endowments, in failings, in surprises; the Whistler sensitive and touchy—the man whose finer clay made possible his achievements and made forgivable his defects.

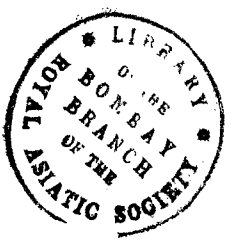
Nevertheless, for the most part, Helleu is the etcher—he must go down to Posterity as the etcher—of the woman's, or girl's, portrait. Youth, its intactness and its flower-like freshness, few at any time have understood better, or so well; but it is oftener the youth of the woman than the youth of the child; and to be reckoned now by the hundred are those coppers—never very numerous the impressions of any one of them—by which Helleu substantiates his claim to fill a place Vandyke left vacant. Why do I name Vandyke? Because, in his etched Portraiture, he was, like Helleu, a specialist, working within narrow limits. In etched Portraiture, men—and men nearly always of a certain world (it was the world of Art generally)—were his affair. Women—young women—are the affair of Helleu, and though his models may

belong to worlds in some respects strongly contrasted, they belong to worlds which, notwithstanding their contrasts, have not a little in common. Other worlds there are, and very interesting ones, into which, for the practice of his art, Helleu does not enter. His models may no more be visibly indigent than visibly old. "Puir folk" he is content to leave to the earlier efforts of Mr. Strang. "Puir folk"—the delight of the Scotsman—do not attract this denizen of Paris—"puir folk," nor the middle classes. Elsewhere I have written that "the long noonday of middle-age has little interest for him," and that "perhaps he is not psychologist enough to feel the intricate fascination of advanced but capable years."

And the young women of Helleu, what must be their ways, their places, and to the ideas of what worlds must they conform? To begin with, they must be—"every man jack amongst them," I was going to say, in an Irishism—to begin with, they must be, beyond question, well dressed. They may be of the great old French families, or of the *haute bourgeoisie*—quite *le dessus du panier*—or they may be enriched Americans, or pretty young French actresses, or (for there are such beings, it appears) *grandes demi-mondaines*. A print of Madame la Comtesse Mathilde de Noailles—writer of more than one much remarked volume of introspective verse—may represent the Château and the Faubourg, the literary Salon where gifted melancholy leaves flirtation no chance—where rhythmic sorrow is poured out with the tea. Or for the Stage, there is Mlle. Gabrielle Dorziat, who was so distinguished and subtle in *La Chaîne anglaise* and in *Antoinette Sabrier*, and Mlle. Yvonne de Bray, who was simplicity itself—affectionate simplicity and accessibility combined—in scene after scene of *Le Ruisseau*. Must I name another sitter, it shall be Liane de Pougy, with her face of

calm and regular beauty, strangely complete—a face "unhurt" (I wrote of it in my introduction to the "Gallery" of Helleu's Portraits published by Mr. Arnold), "unhurt by experience and vicissitude: a face of sensibility, but of sensibility that has weathered the storm."

The great majority of the portraits of Helleu are Drypoints—true "black and white." But into his Portraiture he has introduced, more particularly of late years, certain delicate colours. His fame, a little widened at present, as to the field of it, by this, will not, as I conceive it, be in "the severe to-morrow" vastly enhanced by even the daintiest and most dexterous of his work printed in colour. But, in his employment of colour, Helleu—like M. Simon—must be given credit for reticence: for the possession and due exercise of the artistic sense of what is just the fitting touch—the fitting touch and no more. This granted, Helleu may be forgiven much. He may be forgiven a suavity now and then as mechanical as Cipriani's or Angelica Kauffmann's. He may be forgiven even what, in those of his prints which have the least of character, is an occasional approximation to the fashion-plate's wax-doll prettiness and brainless simper.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CHAPTER XIV

ROUSSEL, BESNARD, STEINLEN, AND SOME CONTEMPORARIES

LET there begin with references to an illustrious Frenchman domiciled in England, a chapter in which are grouped together certain French Etchers and one Swiss artist domiciled in France.

A residence amongst us which is now only shorter than Legros's, has left Théodore Roussel as much a Frenchman as is even that long-exiled citizen of the Republic; only, in Roussel's case, a quite exceptional familiarity with the English tongue, with English Literature, with English life—the familiarity of a deep student or of a first-class diplomat—has become as noticeable as that quality that I began by insisting on: the ineffaceable stamp that is upon Roussel of France and of the South.

Although originality belongs to Roussel, assertion of it cannot belong to him at all. Hence it has taken England a weary time to know him. He has been concerned, with single mind, in the production of his work, without ever a suggestion of eccentricity or *pose*. He has been endowing us with delicate creations, and we have insufficiently credited him with his gift. Yet he is the author of "The Reading Girl"—a canvas whose departure for America is not yet lastingly stayed—of painted visions of the Chelsea Reach, of many lithographs refined and distinguished, and, in Etching, of in-

ventions and records which forbid us to put aside his claims.

And all the time—or half the time, if I must speak by the book—it has seemed good to us to consider Roussel a pupil, merely, of Whistler's, because he was for a while Whistler's neighbour, and for many years his friend. Why, even now, it is not considered altogether unintelligent, after looking at Roussel's etchings and dry-points of the Chelsea shore, to nod encouragingly, and pronounce the patronising judgment, "Little Whistlers —quite!"

And of course there are pieces, amongst this distinguished Frenchman's abundant work, which give an air of reasonableness to the popular delusion. The two men had a kindred delicacy of perception and method; and that was exercised, from time to time, on the same themes, with the result of superficial likeness in actual performance. But, if I may quote, in this connexion, a passage that I penned for the new edition of a generally accessible small volume of my own—*Fine Prints*—"What has that little masterpiece called 'Chelsea Palaces' got to do with Whistler, except in obvious subject? And even here, the *real* subject—the artistic motive—is different. What has a certain delicate and tiny yet so robustly drawn dry-point of a Nude got to do with Whistler?" Whistler's Nudes, in Etching, were suggestions graceful and halting. We must turn to the lithographs for Whistler's best expression of the Nude. Again, What is the connexion with Whistler in Roussel's lovely and recent dry-point of "A French Girl"—the piece that happens to be the subject of illustration on an adjoining or a neighbouring page? "And what in the print of Roussel's front garden, with the snow on trees and railings, and a sense of dreariness over Parson's Green?"

One print alone, the "French Girl"—with its distinguished rendering of distinction—would be enough to make evident, I should suppose, Roussel's high taste. That is apparent quickly. A survey of the wide field of his labour, in Original Engraving, from "Cheyne Walk" to "L'Agonie des Fleurs," would be needed duly to appraise his painfully won possession of quite extraordinary knowledge of technical processes. Of Roussel, as artist in Etching, there may be pronounced the phrase which one associates with Joubert—"Il s'inquiète de perfection bien plus que de gloire."

The Etchings of Besnard—that capable and brilliant painter whose nobly decorative labours give interest to the Ecole de Pharmacie, and to a hospital at Berck (not to speak of anything more recent)—are often, as one would expect them to be, from the character of many of his easel pictures, experiments and reachings-forth. Of his more elaborate compositions—of those in which, at all events by dint of uniting them, remembering them together, we seem to find Besnard fully expressing himself—he has, appropriately enough, not made Etching the medium. But, in Etching, Portraiture has engaged him to some extent, and the Nude—there is the suave and supple "Femme se coiffant." Here he is as successful as in a sheet of Studies, "Croquis," in which are four records of female heads, of beauty and character, thrown vigorously on the copper. Two or three of them are of the same head in different aspects. Many—or at the least several—of Besnard's pieces may be of no immediate appeal—even, if I may venture to say so, to the Collector of taste. Yet we do wrong to ignore as much as is at present our habit, here in England, his productions with the Etching-needle. It cannot be lost

A FRENCH GIRL

THÉODORE ROUSSEL

sight of that Besnard's prints—rarely less than sterling and strong—and in some cases masterly, are part, if a small part, of the expression of a great personality, of which it is certainly a characteristic that the work is ever charged with energy and courage.

The talent of M. Louis Legrand as an Etcher is concerned, perhaps, too often with themes akin to those that in another medium have been dealt with in a manner austere and final, by the genius of Toulouse-Lautrec. Legrand has not the bitterness and pride of that great disappointed man; nor has he Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec's penetration, his tremendous power, his unsurpassed economy of means. As a social observer, he is without a *parti pris*. Therefore, he shuns nothing—but least of all does he shun the record of the inroads made by grasping vice upon the faces of children. Lautrec contented himself, generally, with the sad fortunes of the woman who has gone over the brink—who has not gone over the brink to land at Maxim's, cheerfully, like the hilarious and most good-natured heroine who found expression on the stage through the art and personality of Mlle. Armande Cassive. Lautrec avoided, as a rule, the case of the perverted child; and that is a case that it has seemed good to M. Louis Legrand to probe. But, related indirectly—and not I think, on a comparison, to his advantage—with Toulouse-Lautrec, M. Legrand is on another side related to Degas, Renoir, and Renouard. For him, as for them—and very happily—the ballet-girl at her work: at her work chiefly too in the morning, in the gaunt practising-room; sometimes the mere beginner, awkward with muscular effort at the parallel bars: but engaging, by her *naïveté* and young seriousness—the spirit of a child. Pieces of this sort—prompted by

Legrand's cool, annotating observation, and executed by his skilful hand—are dry-points one may legitimately wish to possess.

Chahine—by origin a Pole—has made himself noticeable by vivid-enough portraits of at least one elderly "star" of second-rate music-halls, Louise France. Leheutre is a French etcher, of architectural themes in the main, whose "line," like Lepère's line, has something in it that is his own—less than Lepère's though, and what it is, it is most difficult to say. M. Armand Berton, a painter of nudities, the best of which have been features of the Spring Shows of the Société Nationale, has a claim to be mentioned as an Etcher who, in a medium apparently not grateful to the purpose, can more or less express the flesh. Plumpness and substance, and, withal, graceful line, are more conspicuously, however, within M. Berton's power—perhaps are more the subjects of his preoccupation—than searching draughtsmanship. A landscape etcher not to be unnoticed is M. Jacques Beurdeley, whose best work, done plainly in accordance with the true traditions, is happily fresh.

Coloured Etching is a branch of the business so comparatively novel—so lacking entirely, and of necessity indeed, in the sanction of Classic example—that one's recognition of it can neither be rapid nor cordial. Thaulow's prints, gaudy and sensational, have yet a certain power, which of itself does not go far to justify the method; and gaudiness and superficiality are so very constantly the notes of popular French effort in this direction, that there is no need for an apology for leaving practically out of consideration this almost foreign matter. It belongs to us, in this book, scarcely more than

does Reproductive Etching—notwithstanding M. Roussel's ingenuity (when this artist, so delightful and distinguished in black and white, is minded to use colour); notwithstanding too Mr. Livens's discretion when, with the delicate hand, this most potent draughtsman in Water Colour of our bridges, and our everyday London houses and our Brighton hotels, adds colour to dry-point in a certain print of "Flowers in a Vase"; and, notwithstanding the reticence with which M. T. F. Simon has employed hues dainty but telling—never obliterating that expression by line which is of the very essence of Etching—in really admirable plates of the book-hunter of the Parisian quays and of the summer visitors to a Norman beach.

Colour in Etching is, for our present purpose—incidentally, as it were—disposed of; and we go on to end the chapter upon the interesting French by reference to the Swiss-born artist who has understood with so instinctive a sympathy the humble life of France—the life of her great towns, their dreariest faubourgs; the joys and troubles of gas-fitter and plumber; the *petite ouvrière's* naïve, responsive soul, and subtle grace; the idyll of the twilight streets. I mean Steinlen.

Steinlen, born in Lausanne, coming to Paris early, and to-day a man in late middle life, from whom, as he began so young and has worked so indefatigably, it might be idle now to expect any development as remarkable as that which I have thankfully witnessed since first I used to pay my *sou*, eagerly, on a Sunday, for the new issue of *Le Gil Blas illustré*—Steinlen, working in other mediums, has not done many very notable Etchings: he has done a good many which have called for the production of not at all the greatest of his gifts. A few Etchings Steinlen has done, however, whose qualities of insight and

technique, of sentiment and draughtsmanship, ensure for him a definite place and convey a unique pleasure. The three I most remember are first the "Bouge"—a study of awkward, low-class youth, hesitating at the door of a discreditable tavern—a thing obviously not attractive as to its story, but marvellous for character, marvellous for illumination, and curiously human too, without a touch of cynicism—then, "La Rentrée des Travailleurs," the animated street when toil is over for the day, in factories and workshops, and so much packed Humanity is suddenly released and sent upon its ways—and last, and possibly most pictorial and complete, if not actually most dramatic of all, "Les Musiciens," or to give it its more informing name, I think, "Le Concert dans la Rue." Musicians face the crowd, in a great *carrefour* that is the vast auditorium. Its boundaries are tall house-fronts on which the white light flickers; and round them, to the imagination, is all Paris, and above them the vague blackness of impenetrable sky.

It is impossible to see these prints of Steinlen's without recognizing that here is an observer unbaffled, undeterred; here an alert, sufficient craftsman; and here a sensitive and fearless soul.

LE CONCERT DANS LA RUE

STEINLEN

CHAPTER XV

ITALIAN ETCHERS

THE most generally interesting writer, the most habitually tolerant critic, amongst my predecessors who have written in England at all at length upon the art of Etching, has failed, it must be said, quite to do justice to Salvator Rosa as an Etcher, and has failed to do justice to Canaletto, both as Etcher and artist. When Mr. Hamerton—occupied habitually in elucidation and intelligent praise—thinks fit to put into their proper small and undistinguished places in the ranks of Etchers certain of the elder Dutchmen, one of whom at least was a very great painter, I am as much in sympathy with him as when he extols Vandyke and eulogizes Rembrandt; but his comments upon Salvator Rosa omit a recognition of such good work in Etching as Salvator, amidst ambitious dullnesses, did now and then succeed in accomplishing—it came from him, really, I believe, with the least of conscious effort—and, again, as regards Canaletto, Mr. Hamerton's verdict, "Mediocrity, but respectable," is one which the newer generation of students has some right to reverse. Not, indeed, that the newest race of students has any right—or, I should hope, any inclination—to lift Canaletto on high. His place must ever be in the second rank—but how honourable a one! Salvator's—of whom we will speak first—must be many steps below his.

Mr. Hamerton is right, then, in the main, in saying that Salvator, notwithstanding his gifts, "was not a good

etcher, because he did not insist upon the especial powers of the art." He adds: "All that Salvator did in Etching might be done equally well in Engraving, and he really aimed at the artistic objects of the great Italian engravers. Some of his plates are admirable in their way, but they are all bad examples of etching." And then Mr. Hamerton singles out "The Abandonment of Œdipus" as "the finest." But how the "finest," if they are all bad?

I pass now to my own notes upon the British Museum Collection. And while they confirm my predecessor's general estimate, they enter their protest against his too sweeping inclusion of the whole of Salvator Rosa's plates as "bad etching."

It will be long before the world is again very much interested—"Has it ever been really very much interested?" one might ask—in the "Pious Subjects" of Salvator Rosa (to adopt the nomenclature of Bartsch). Their number is fortunately limited. Are the subjects of "Profane History" really much more entrancing? The first of them, in Bartsch's order at least, "Platon et ses Disciples," *fait voir* "ce philosophe assis sur une butte, faisant une démonstration à celui de ses disciples qui est adossé contre un arbre." I am not certain that this "démonstration" may not excite, with us, hilarity. "Alexander in the Studio of Apelles" is almost puerile. Diogenes, in the first of the plates that are devoted to him, is a little more dramatic.

In the Mythological subjects, less hugely empty, the work more dramatic again, and, at the same time, in effect more decorative—executed in obedience to a more ordered design—we see Salvator favourably. These things still live for us. The various "Combats de Tritons"—of which, by reason partly of the effective introduction of one female figure, I account the print,

Bartsch No. 11, to be the best—have noteworthy energy, movement, passion. "Pan and the Two Fauns" is even highly imaginative, in its grotesque way. Further, Apollo and the Cumæan Sibyl, in the piece of that name, have a dignified *tenue*. Glaucus, *Dieu marin*, in pursuit of the nymph Scylla—of whom the venerable bearded immortal shows himself mildly amorous (he visibly approves of her gesture) is not deprived of grace. And—leaving these subjects—in a further Series, a soldier standing with a staff in his right hand is what may be called "spirited"; and again—this time seen almost from behind—another soldier with a staff has merit: is expressive. "Une Femme assise dans une Solitude" is strangely ill-drawn. Happier is a "Young Mother bearing her child in her arms."

The smaller pieces are the best—nearly everything I have praised is small, relatively—and they are best especially as performances in the art of Etching. That is true, above all, of the "Young Mother" and of the group of Triton subjects. It occurs to me to say, here, that the touch and something of the character of the few Triton subjects bear, it would seem, a significant resemblance to what is in the Classic, or semi-Classic, themes of Fragonard's few, rare, and very little known etchings. The work, in neither case quite academically correct, is, in both, singularly free and expressive. Lippmann was greatly on the spot in having a good word for Fragonard.

Now, Canaletto; and as when we were discussing his sometimes almost melodramatic predecessor, may we not ask here not only "Wherein does Mr. Hamerton do Canaletto injustice?" but also, "Wherein has he been by this critic accurately appraised?"

Well, the Eighteenth-Century Venetian is certainly

appraised accurately when it is declared that his work is "clear, and simple, and honest, and with a moderate appreciation of beauty," and that his subjects "were usually well selected, and his works pictorial." Then—it having been already written that "the word which best describes him is, respectable mediocrity"—Mr. Hamerton proceeds: "In slighter work than that of Canaletto there may be much frank *omission*, even of tonic relations; but Canaletto laboured his plates all over, and when *he* failed in this respect, it was not the bold transgression of consummate science, but the hesitating error of half-knowledge."

Here there is criticism which has both truth and error: a commendation inadequate, when it is at all deserved, and with it the exaggeration of an occasional fault. It is true that in some of the larger and more intricate of Canaletto's plates the tonality is defective and the result tame. Piranesi's heavy "bitings" have no counterpart in the work of the Venetian, nor is the ink massed upon Canaletto's plate. To each the *défaut* of his *qualité*—and the *qualité* of his *défaut*. Béjot—of whom not the least of the characteristics is that his work is rich in the effects of light and shade—pointed out to me, I remember, as one of the reasons why he admired Canaletto so much, that a print of Canaletto's was never too black. "We modern people misuse black: we exaggerate it," he said.

Now, Hamerton judged Canaletto's work—when he judged it adversely—by the large prints, in most cases; and, in most cases, the large prints are not the better ones. Notwithstanding his reputation as a draughtsman of Architecture, Canaletto's best etchings are seldom the ones in which Architecture plays the leading rôle. In his best etchings, it may be introduced—it is introduced—charmingly. It may or must be there, but woe to it

LE PILIER ISOLÉ

CANALETTO

—woe to it in most cases—when it affects to "hold the stage"! It is best in the smaller etchings—and these, upon the whole, are the plates that are now to be most sought after. Here and there in them—as in the print of the Venetian Library and in that of the Ducal Palace, the main interest is Architecture, but, even then, not to the exclusion of serene and delicate effects of light. But preferable even, to my mind, to these happy-enough examples—more really to be desired than the prints of Palace and Library—are those pieces—smallish always, as *they* are smallish—which are mainly Landscape pieces. These have some touch of modernness; but the Classic is in them too—in them to some extent by reason of their arrangement: in them likewise because fine Architecture does here and there appear upon the scene, with its suggestiveness, its appeal, to the eye first, no doubt, but then to the imagination. See, for example, the pieces called—and rightly called, because these objects count for so much in them—"Les Deux Piliers" and "Le Pilier isolé." The landscape, airy and charming, has, not the Present only, but a something beyond. The landscape itself is not Nature alone: that is quite true: it is not Nature run wild: it is civilized—men are in it. But, thanks to the columns—thanks to these "two pillars," and this "pillar isolated"—something is in it, too, that is more than men—Man: the Past.

The partial resuscitation of Annibale Caracci may be among the nearest of Time's revenges, and when to his sentiment, his draughtsmanship, and his design, far fuller justice is accorded than any that is done to him to-day, there will be, of necessity, added appreciation of his work in Etching. That work in Etching was not extensive; but it was considerable. It was not absorbing, but it was

excellent, and some regard must be paid to the period at which it was executed. Wrought something like a generation before the appearance on the scene of Rembrandt, Vandyke, Claude—and several generations before that of the agreeable chronicler of Venice of whom I have just spoken—it is unlikely that Caracci's etched plates could engage his attention over long spells of time; but its limitations in amount and character—such as they are—do not suggest to us in the least that Annibale Caracci approached the art of Etching with an inadequate apprehension of its possibilities and scope, or with any hurry to deliver himself upon the copper of a series of memoranda only for his own future reference, or of a message to the public he could reach—urgent, brief, and of quite temporary importance. No, indeed, a thorough consideration of his theme, unity in a measure of elaboration, and much refinement of handling, are virtues which he cultivated with care, and with the possession of which he must be credited. "Collected"—collected, that is, *en bloc*—he may not be; but yet no private cabinet of prints should be without an example of his outlook upon history and tradition—of his vision and of his method. And the piece which, all things considered, seems the most desirable is that which is known as "The Christ of Caprarola." It is a *Descente du Croix*. It was wrought by Caracci in 1597. It is deliberate, suave, and tender.

The Christ in this refined and touching print, to which Caprarola gives its name, lies along the picture, one arm and side supported against the knee of His mother, who sits above and beside him. It is a sympathetic company. No one is of it but those who, in feeling, were nearest Him: the Virgin; and Mary the mother of James; and St. John, holding tenderly the pierced hand; and Mary Magdalene, solicitous, beautiful. A bare and

broken upland landscape—showing, at wide intervals, the base of two of the crosses—rolls away to a remote horizon. The line is flowing and ample; the modelling of the figures has virility and delicacy; not a face but is charged with feeling. Thus even the most sworn admirers of the great realist Rembrandt, whose treatment of Biblical subjects was, thirty and forty years later, to be so personal, intimate, penetrating, may yet find relief and pleasure in Caracci's vision, with its broader generalization, in which Sorrow has elevation and grace.

Tiepolo—who flourished in the mid-Eighteenth Century—is again fashionable to-day, as painter and as draughtsman. Fortunately he does not recommend himself alone by his vogue. As an etcher, however, he is not of high importance; though he is one of those who must be exempted from the charge, brought accurately enough against the Italian Etchers as a whole, of having used the copper, the needle, and the acid as a convenient means of repeating, in many copies, the effect of a pen drawing. Perhaps Mr. A. M. Hind is the first person who has said—and he has said it with truth—that Tiepolo seems to have borne in mind, in Etching, the favourite light scheme ("white scheme" is what this excellent student actually calls it) of his paintings. But the very recognition of that preoccupation upon Tiepolo's part is tantamount to admitting that, at least often, the engaging Venetian failed to conceive of his work upon the plate as Etching first and last—Etching with the effects Etching alone could give.

Of this failure—if that indeed can be called "failure" which is really absence of attempt towards the particular end—the piece which I have chosen to illustrate Tiepolo, in this book ("L'Adoration des Rois," done for the Con-

vent of S. Aranjuez), is itself an example. But it has a right to be here, as quite indicative of the artist's frequent manner, and as a rendering, typically Venetian, of a Sacred Subject. Its presentation of the theme is intricate, dignified, stately, and withal a little mundane—thus Venetian entirely. It lacks suggestion of the *naïveté*, even quaintness, with which, in perhaps the simplest of his immortal Sonnets, that great artist in Literature, José Maria de Heredia, has endowed the scene in which "les Rois mages—Gaspar, Melchior, Balthazar"—are in the presence of the Infant "qui rit, et les admire." The easy grace of Tiepolo, as well as his drawing, so admirable, so expressive, and so much in accord with the medium of which he was availing himself, might have been better shown by the selection, from the *Capricci*, of his "Nymph, Satyr-child, and Goats."

Giovanni Piranesi—lately written of most interestingly by Mr. Samuel—must have a few lines consecrated to his picturesque views—his all too uniformly striking records of old Rome, which in the latter half of the Eighteenth Century satisfied the antiquary and perhaps the artist, and, in the first quarter of the Nineteenth, seemed even to our admirable Cotman a most desirable possession. And Piranesi, of course, has his worth, and to the picturesque side of Architecture—of his buildings, often thrust into the foreground—he was fully alive; and yet his work, it must be apprehended, halted a little between a record and a creation. But it did not always halt, or, in halting, did not always suffer; and the plates of his imaginary Dungeons—weird prisons dreamt of, it is said, in nights disturbed and broken—are a success, indubitably. So, differently, is his "St. Peter's."

LES ROIS MAGES

TIEPOLO

Piranesi's plates are very large: hence unfit, often, for the folio or the hand. But framed, and hung together in a moderate-sized hall, they imply, albeit a little monotonously, that we find ourselves in the dwelling of a cultivated person of the older type. I am not sure that they do not suggest that most respectable of Pasts, the early Past of your great-grandfather, and his return from "the grand tour."

CHAPTER XVI

VANDYKE AND HOLLAR

THE Etchings of Vandyke—none too numerous: Mr. Carpenter catalogued about Twenty-three—date mostly from his Antwerp time—his earlier time—and were, as far as he was concerned, quite done with before ever he came to take up his abode in England as the painter of our Stuarts. When Vandyke died, he was forty-two: to his earliest maturity—but to maturity undoubtedly—belongs his etched work.

I use above the phrase, "quite done with, as far as he was concerned." Who else, then, had to do with them? Alas, there were many. The bulk of Vandyke's etchings were wrought by him for the "Iconographie"—the immense series of portraits of famous people of his day. Here the scheme was that he should etch the heads—suggest with his etched lines the figures—and that then the competent if mechanical reproductive engraver should step in with additions and elaborations, adapting the work more or less to popular acceptance and success. As the long task, in which so many shared, proceeded, the scheme was changed materially. There was given to the reproductive engravers a larger labour and responsibility even than that at first assigned to them. In the case of most of the coppers, the work upon the head was put in from a drawing only, and Vandyke's needle knew no exercise whatever on this vast majority of the plates.

If 1626, the year of his return from Italy to Antwerp,

saw the first of Vandyke's etchings in their original state, the year 1632, in which the Master established himself in England, saw, in their original state, probably the last of them. There was no appreciation for them in his time, nor indeed until long after his time—until the Nineteenth Century had run no small part of its course. Then, in 1844, Mr. Carpenter—at that day Keeper of the Prints at the British Museum—made his careful Catalogue; and when any man of authority makes a catalogue, there will be amateurs to wake up to the appreciation of the things that are so, by implication, eulogized. Scarcely a generation later than that of Carpenter, Philip Gilbert Hamerton put them into something approaching their place, and yet a generation after Mr. Hamerton they were subjected to the closest and best qualified judgment of Mr. Lionel Cust, who wrote about them with terseness and with knowledge. The French, meantime, and Collectors in the Low Countries, had not been silly enough to neglect them; and it may be said that the plates now, in their early untouched state, or, as regards some of them, in a state tampered with so little that nothing has been added but a light and not always disadvantageous background (see the "De Wael," for instance, a masterpiece of energy and expression in the state in which Hendriz—whose "G. H." it bears—formally published it, in 1642), have taken their true rank: that is to say, that in their own kind, and taking count of their intentional limitations, their relative simplicity, they are recognized as having known no superiors.

Vandyke, in these decisive, summary, and noble sketches—the "De Wael," the "Vosterman," the "Van Noort," the "Peter Breugel," the "Snyders" are perhaps the most pregnant and impressive—can of course claim no rivalry with the subtler portraits of Rembrandt, in

which the depths of character are plumbed, and what complex experiences recorded! But the penetrating gaze of the Flemish master—directed, too, in most cases to the study of men with whom and with whose life of Art he was in sympathy—has made a diagnosis rapid and correct, which his needle, facile and energetic, neither pausing often nor often *requiring* to pause, has recorded with unerring stroke. The method is economical and the success assured. No wonder that in our own day it should have been assumed and adopted—followed with decent faithfulness and little failure—by several not altogether uninteresting people, part of whose skill consists in "prenant leur bien là où ils le trouvent."

To study, to consider, and to treat the master of Prague directly after the master of Antwerp—to consider Wenceslaus Hollar after or with Vandyke—is what, in the studio slang of not so very long ago, would have been called "amusing" (the average painter's conception of humour being something, or anything, that interests him slightly). It would be difficult to find men—Vandyke and Hollar were contemporaries—whose work is more strongly or more obviously contrasted; and that is the result of different circumstances, and, above all, of different temperaments. To the velvet of the sward, Vandyke—handsome and dashing and a courtier and marvellously endowed—was early motioned. The patronage of the Earl of Arundel—the first great English Collector—did not prevent the wandering Bohemian from living laborious days, from abstaining from "delights" that he had scarcely the opportunity of "scorning," and of dying in an encumbering poverty: almost in obscurity and neglect.

The relative positions of the two men now—the relative estimate of their engraved work—is matter for reflection,

DE WAEL

VANDYKE

but not at all for amazement. In days when a decisive rapidity and economy of means is welcomed more, by people *dans le mouvement*, than a realization conspicuous for industry, there can be nothing remarkable in the circumstance that Vandyke is, if anything, a little unduly exalted, and that Hollar is—as certainly he is or has been —undervalued. It is hardly more than a generation ago that the position of the two was reversed; and it is characteristic of the English appreciation of Hollar, in the 'Fifties and 'Sixties, that Seymour Haden, whose tastes and whose opinions in Art matters were formed mainly in those decades, should have been of Hollar the strenuous and, as I think, for a time, the over-zealous advocate. He said once, in print, that when he was asked what he saw in Hollar, he could only answer, that he saw "*everything*," or "nearly everything." I remember—in later years—venturing to take him mildly to task upon that subject, and I asked him whether he saw Passion, whether he saw Imagination. And he yielded the point, very gracefully and cordially—as, on occasion, it was quite within his power to do. He admitted he had over-praised Hollar, or had praised him too universally—without critical qualification. And now it is my turn to insist upon—to be called on, one may say, to insist upon—what even then I was most absolutely prepared to admit, or to maintain: that is, that Hollar, though deficient in the gifts of the greatest, though wanting the impulse and the at times "white heat" of the highest, most poetic, most finely organized natures, had every gift of intelligence, of correctness, of trained and various and delicate dexterity, of an industry that never failed, and was scarcely ever misapplied. And if one can say all that of Hollar—and really it is one's business to say it—Hollar must be a most considerable personage in Art, only temporarily and

only undeservedly a little under a cloud—and that cloud now lifting. Seymour Haden was right in saying, "If any one want truth without pretension, let him go to Hollar. If he want perfection of 'biting' and precise gradation, let him go to Hollar."

The best account of Hollar that has been written in English—albeit it is an account by one who gently shared Seymour Haden's once rather intemperate enthusiasm—is the work of an amateur who, habitually, was quiet in expression, yet, in his tranquil way, was perfectly independent, courageous, and even advanced in his taste; and that is the Rev. J. J. Heywood—who was among the first people in England (and that, in this case, means one of the first anywhere) to collect the Etchings of Méryon: one of the first, too, to discern, when, with English Collectors, only the *Liber Studiorum* of Turner was talked about, that the mezzotints after Constable, by David Lucas, were quite unsurpassable translations or transcripts from the great naturalistic landscape-painter. Heywood—to whom I cannot tire of expressing my personal indebtedness in several matters—was the chief organizer, and, one may say, the chief contributor to the not exhaustive, of course, but yet the large and very thoroughly representative Exhibition of the master of Prague, which, in the year 1875, was held at the Burlington Fine Arts Club. He was the anonymous author of the account and estimate of Hollar which the Catalogue contained. For a complete catalogue of Hollar's immense work, one must turn to the German—Parthey—but for most practical purposes, and certainly for the æsthetic student, the private publication of the Burlington Club is desirable and adequate.

One Hundred and Thirty-six pieces were exhibited in Savile Row. It will at the first moment hardly be believed that, as far as numbers are concerned, that was

only a twentieth part of Hollar's immense output. Such is the fact, however; for Parthey has chronicled Two Thousand Seven Hundred and Thirty-three pieces, and Mr. Heywood says that there escaped him just about seven prints.

Before naming some notable ones, and touching further on the characteristics of his Work, let the course of this engraver's most laborious life be briefly outlined. Born at Prague, in 1607—a Bohemian of gentle blood—he was intended for the profession of the Law; but troubles, coming upon his country, ruined his family, and liberated Hollar—liberated him to follow, as Mr. Heywood says, the "natural bent of his mind," and by the time he was nineteen he had worked on his first coppers, and by the time he was twenty we find him at Frankfort, a pupil of Matthew Merian — the engraver whose works the foreign print-dealers used to imagine you were asking for, if you asked, thirty or thirty-five years ago, for the works of the great etcher of Paris. From 1629 to 1633 Hollar lived and laboured at Strasbourg, some of whose main features—the Shooting Ground, the Bathing Place, the Wine Market, and the Parade—are set down in one set of the Four Seasons (Parthey, 622 to 625), not to be confused with the charming half-lengths of ladies which bear the same name. The next three years—till 1636—the young master (for then he was hardly less than a master) passed at Cologne, where amongst much besides, of course, there was executed the pleasant little Etching, "Lady Playing the Spinet," and several of the set of smaller heads known as the "Reisbüchlein"; and it may be noted here, a little out of place, but interesting as evidence of his early accomplishment, that before he left Strasbourg he had wrought a view of its Cathedral, which, not published till something like ten years later,

received the compliment of being copied by Hollars' teacher, Merian, for his work on Alsace. Before 1636 was over, Thomas, Earl of Arundel—passing through Cologne "on a mission," says Mr. Heywood, "from Charles the First to the Imperial Court at Vienna," found Hollar and was pleased with him and took him into his service. To Linz, to Prague itself, went Hollar with Lord Arundel; making at Prague the drawing for that "Long View of Prague" which came to be worked only in 1649, and the artist and his patron reached England in 1637. Hollar's early days in England seem to have been divided between labours prompted by Lord Arundel—plates reproducing certain pictures in the Arundel Collection—and work undertaken on his own account; for the very first English year saw produced a "View of Greenwich"—a plate which one Stent is said to have bought from Hollar for Thirty Shillings—and the interesting bust which has been accepted generally as the portrait of Milton, young. A wonderful reproductive engraving of 1640—a piece of Still Life of the most elaborate kind which I confess I am unable to look at with enthusiasm in presence of the Still Life of Jacquemart—is the "Chalice," copied, or translated, if here that word be necessary, from the drawing by Mantegna.

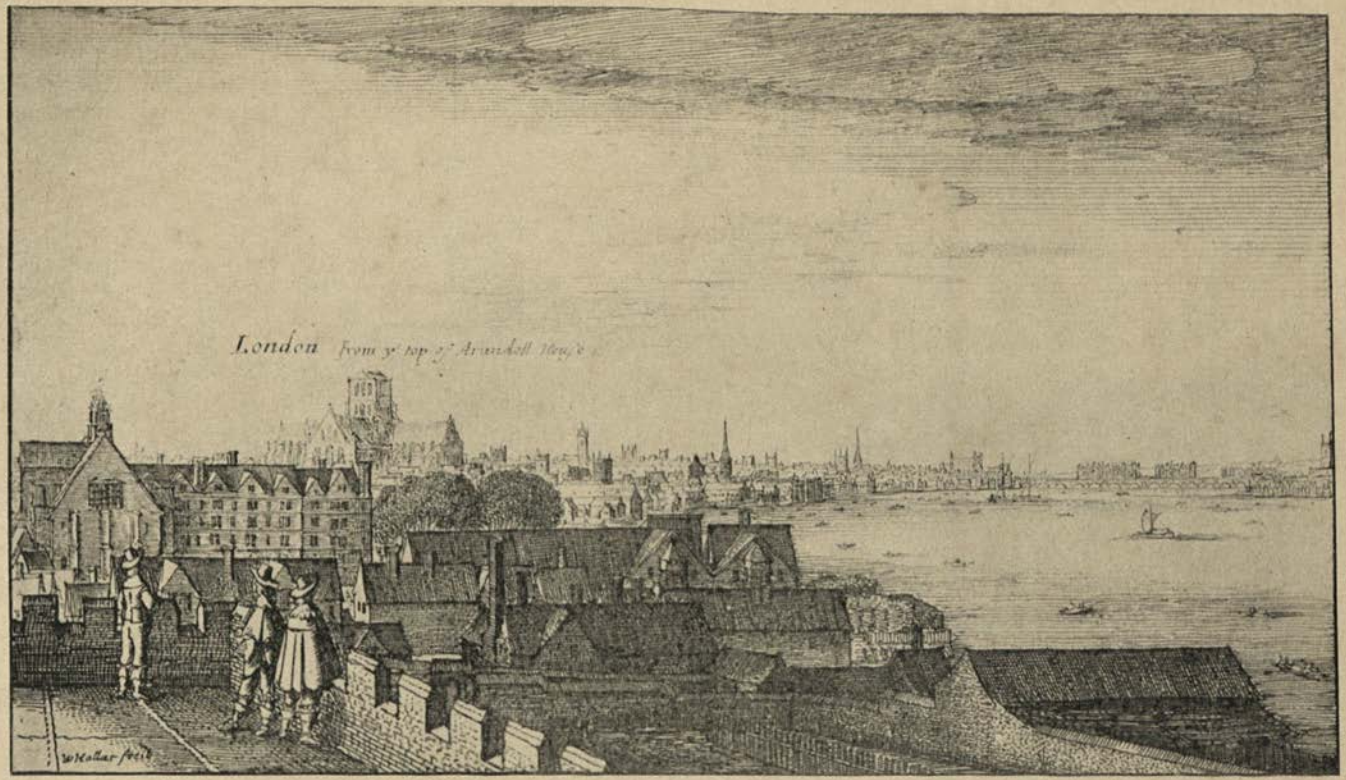
In 1642, Lord Arundel left England, and Hollar passed into the household of the Duke of York: a year or two later, in company of Faithorne and of Inigo Jones, he was at Basing House, during the siege in which for long the armies of the Parliament were baffled. Finally he was taken prisoner, but, it must be surmised, contriving to escape, succeeded in joining Lord Arundel at Antwerp, whence were issued, at that period, certain of his plates. Two years later—in 1646—the friend and

patron left Antwerp for Italy—to die at Padua, as it happened, within but few months. Then Hollar became very prolific and exceedingly poor. Need stimulated him. He did in Antwerp his remarkable set of Shells—things which nothing but the "Damier" of Rembrandt can surpass in magic of performance—the Small Butterflies, and most of the "Muffs." He did there, too, what at least Mr. Heywood counts as almost chief among his masterpieces—albeit it is but interpretation—and that is the portrait of James, Duke of York, after the picture painted by the younger Teniers in 1651. The year next following, Hollar was once more in London, and it is interesting to know that it was with Faithorne that for a time he took up his abode. But, both before and after the Restoration—which might conceivably have bettered his fortunes—Hollar's life continued to be a struggle. "The publishers continued," says the Burlington Club Catalogue, "to impose upon his good nature and his necessities." Stent demurred to receive the portrait of Hobbes of Malmesbury, in 1665, though its excellence was not disputed. It was a question only of terms, and the bookseller's price, generally, for Hollar's labour was some fourpence an hour.

In the depths of his poverty, Hollar, the irrepressible, married; and in 1668 the King, whose cause he had served, sent him to Tangier, to make drafts of the forts. It was not, however, until much time had passed that the engraver was put in possession of the reward of his labours. Meanwhile, he had resumed work for the trade, and, living finally in Gardiner Street, Westminster, he plodded on to the end. That came in March, 1677, the bailiffs being in his house in his dying hour. It was not until his widow had long survived him that there was sold by her to Sir Hans Sloane that large and fine

collection of his prints which, coming afterwards to the British Museum, formed the basis of the vast assemblage of his *œuvre* which may there be studied.

Hollar put artistry into hack-work, and so—often happily forgetful, it may be, of his private circumstances—probably enjoyed it. But the mass of this so respectable labour exists now only to be occasionally exhumed. Here and there is to be found—and, when it is found, valued—in addition to pieces of the character this narrative has already named, pieces of quaint topography, and what is now, by lapse of time, quaint history, such as the small Six Views in the North of London—which records the Islington of Hollar's day—and such more particularly as the still smallish "View of London from the top of Arundel House," a thing marvellous and admirable, which has perhaps everything that Art can give, to record of bare fact—except emotion. "Except emotion"—and that, after all, was called for seldom, in the themes of this ingenious, pertinacious, delicate craftsman, the "simple probity" of whose labour and life may well enough be found fascinating.



LONDON FROM THE TOP OF ARUNDEL HOUSE

HOLLAR

CHAPTER XVII

GOYA

THE fact that Goya's Etchings—which are half of them aquatints—are very seldom to be met with in that condition of preciousness and purity, brilliance and cleanliness, that fits them for the solander-boxes of the fastidious collector, must not induce the serious student—whether collector or craftsman—to forget this truth: that Goya was the one great artist in Etching who appeared in the long years that separated the generation of Méryon from the generation of Rembrandt and of Claude. Goya was an artist of wide and penetrating mind, of abounding imagination, of alert vision, of powerful and dexterous hand. Besides this, he was more modern than that Eighteenth Century in which he began—as Rembrandt was more modern than that Seventeenth Century in which he wholly practised.

Painter of Church frescoes, which were fuller than even the religious pictures of the Venetians—Tintoret, Titian, Veronese—of secular appeal; painter of portraits in which something of the grace of Gainsborough seems not incompatible with something of the relentless insight of Balzac, the imagination of Goya and his unfailing observation, his sense of terror and of comedy, come, all together, to the front in his performances upon the copper—in his several hundred prints.

Francisco Jose de Goya y Lucientes was born near Saragossa in 1746. He lived till 1828, and died then at Bordeaux, aged eighty-two. The son of poor, robust

parents, he was born in obscurity. He fought with difficulties: he had his day of visible success. For the space of a generation, this *intrinsigeant*, of revolutionary mind, was accepted and was quite the fashion as a portrait painter, in circles and at a Court the most ceremonious and most outwardly correct of any in all Europe—this man of magical nature was, to boot, *persona grata* in boudoirs. All sorts of experiences, all sorts of adventures, all sorts of risks were his. Taking his pleasure, yet accomplishing his work—which was the need of his being—he went recklessly and resolutely on. In his moodiness and his uncertainty of temper, his old age was but an exaggeration of his youth. And almost to the last, in exile, in renewed obscurity, Goya could charm, as he could repel.

That indication of his life and character, put in few words, gives the clue, perhaps, to the variety and power, to the aggressiveness and fascination of his Art. And now, we narrow our inquiry, restrict our purview, to his performances in Etching.

These consist for the most part of four long series of prints: there are, besides them, a few works of the artist's youth—his fairly careful etched copies of pictures by Velasquez, and desultory work, slight, but wholly his own—and certain pieces which it is considered belong to nearly his latest years. These unconnected pieces, and pieces which copy the conceptions of another, one can, in Goya's case, afford to disregard. Indeed, a certain choice and judgment must be exercised even in considering the different Series: so vast is the material that, while willing enough to glance at the *Tauromachia* and *The Proverbs*—noting the dramatic vigour of the one and the ingenuity of the other—we shall not unprofitably find ourselves concentrating our attention on *The Disasters*

MALA NOCHE

GOYA

of War and the *Caprices*. Finally, it is to the *Caprices* that, in my opinion, we shall most incline; and not only because that publication has in the greatest degree Goya's characteristic union of fantastic but attention-compelling composition with illumination impressive and unforgetable, and with draughtsmanship distinguished and subtle.

The Disasters of War brings into prominence Goya's feeling for the Race, and his most vivid perception of dramatic action—his sense of physical pain—of its acute torture—of the not less acute torture of the mind, when it is the pain of those to whom we are attached that, willy-nilly, we are called on to behold. The result of Goya's vision may be interesting or appalling: the point of view was, without doubt, humanitarian. What is shown is shown with an unfailing vividness, and there is shown every conceivable disaster, peril, fear. Here Goya, with remembrance of invading armies in his native land, drew in part, one may suppose, on observation, and in part on report. An immense imagination governed the whole or dominated it, but Goya has no exaggeration that cannot convince us of its truth. Imaginative in one sense is the print in which one cup of water—one solitary cup—is passed round, on a dark field, among the dying. Imaginative in another is the Frontispiece to the Set: "Tristes presentimentos de lo que ha de acontecer." The figure is a very figure of Tragedy—of Tragedy foreseen and realized.

The *Caprices* covers wider ground. Mr. Rothenstein, who, following M. Lefort and M. Yriarte in France, was at least one of the first persons in England to study Goya seriously, notes in the master "a quite particular sense of the wanton charm of women." Of this it is certainly the *Caprices* that affords—next to fine painted portraits, such as that of the Duchess of Alba, Goya's inamorata—the most conspicuous evidence. But the *Caprices* is much

more than an analysis or presentation of this or that woman, this or that characteristic of women. It has for its business the whole field of social satire. The weapon of irony is its instrument. It need neglect nothing that fantastic Comedy may touch. In fashion brilliant and engaging, it sums up Goya's philosophy—his cynical and sad comedian's view of Life and of the world. Goya said practically in it what was said by a writer, putting the last lines to a particular volume: "J'ai vu les mœurs de mon temps, et j'ai écrit ce livre."

Alas! that conceptions—often indeed not agreeable, but always remarkable and potent, whether of mordant satire or of hilarious farce, or of meaning quite enigmatic, puzzle as much as we may—alas! I say, that these conceptions, these performances, should be so difficult to be possessed of, under conditions that do justice to them. Delays and accidents and the incompetent handling of craftsmen who had little interest in their work, deprived the people caring for Goya's Art of what might have been many fine impressions; and later, there succeeded a prodigality of distribution of examples absolutely worn and unrepresentative. The issue of these things, by men in office at the Calcografia of Madrid—lately and years ago—was, to the mind of the Collector at least, an act not of gratitude at all to Goya's memory. Happy is the Collector who just here and there may pounce upon a creditable copy of one of the great Series. Fortunate is the student at the Print Room in Bloomsbury, who sees the *Caprices* in a copy—"Los Capricios di Goya" is the lettering upon it: it has no dated "title," but there in the forefront is Goya in a tall hat—it is an item in the collection—and the Print Room Catalogue assigns to the volume the date 1799—six years only after the publication or even execution of this Series was commenced.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE EARLIER ENGLISH ETCHING

THE first English Etching of substantial importance, the first reflecting great personalities in Art —and great temperaments, expressed, naturally at that time, chiefly in Painting—were those produced at various dates during the first forty years of the Nineteenth Century, and their authors were Girtin, Turner, "Old" Crome, Cotman, Wilkie, Geddes. If each of these artists had wrought much in the particular art of which this volume treats, and if each had wrought his much with anything approaching to a modern master's knowledge of technique or to Rembrandt's—the show of great Etchings made at that time would in certain respects outvie the show that can be made now, happily, by bringing together the works of the masters of that English Revival which in the late 'Fifties, and in the 'Sixties and the 'Seventies, was due to Whistler and to Seymour Haden. It would outvie also the show that can be made by artists of the French Revival, which by but a few years preceded our own.

But of the six English or English and Scottish artists whom I have mentioned as the potential producers—each one of them, assuredly—of a glorious *Œuvre* in Etching, and each of whom is still to be considered with respect and interest, only one—and he is the bearer of the least familiar name, for it is Andrew Geddes—was entirely in this art the master of his means. Nay, even he was not

entirely the master of his means, or was so only because his means—the means he used rather—were dexterously limited. It was in the employment of the direct, comparatively simple process of Dry-point that Andrew Geddes excelled.

Turner, who etched chiefly to obtain emphatic outline and occasional force of shadow—in the *Liber Studiorum* subjects, which others, in exactly six cases out of seven, were to mezzotint—and which in one case out of seven: that is, in ten out of the whole seventy, he was to mezzotint himself—knew all of Etching that is pure draughtsmanship (draughtsmanship chancing, in these instances, to be done upon copper), but knew nothing of the mysteries of the particular craft. He did not fail. He succeeded — brilliantly — but he succeeded because he restricted himself mainly to a draughtsman's task.

Girtin knew only Soft-ground Etching. His admirable Paris Views, which Lewis aquatinted, were outlined in the Soft-ground process—the composition, as in Turner's case, thus placed upon the table—and of Girtin's Etching that was the charming beginning and the modest end.

The best of Cotman's were Soft-ground. So were some of the best of Crome's—pure, direct studies in Tree-drawing—but, likewise, some of Crome's best fortunately made calls on the resources of the fuller method. So also did the prints of Wilkie: yet only once or twice were those calls, in his case, finely responded to.

And all these men were personalities—there is not one of them who does not seriously count. Alas! also—as I have said—there is not one of them who was in full command of all the processes of the medium: though there was one of them, Geddes, who was in command of the particular process he chose to employ. And accordingly it was but partially, in any case, that the

personality was expressed. Now Haden and Whistler—whose work comes up for comparison—were practised, studious, fully equipped handlers of their implements. They understood biting—they understood everything from the scratch upon the varnish to the issue of the first proof, or of the last proof, from the press. And did the great artists of the French Revival understand less? What secrets of the craft (notwithstanding his own modest disclaimer) were unknown to Méryon—whose genius formed perfect voice? What were unknown to Bracquemond? what to Jacquemart, whose characteristics in manipulation were flexibility, vigour, exquisite delicacy? Of the three Schools then, that I have here, in spirit, brought into juxtaposition, one only—and that was the earlier English—did not really or completely know its business. The result is, that it expressed but little of that of which it might have been delivered. Nevertheless, by its own greatness, by the greatness of its message, and partly too by the occasional success of its method of speech, that earlier English School is of high interest and real value, and we consider it with respect.

Crome must be the first artist—it may be even the only one—to be at all elaborately discussed. His work in Etching was performed within the compass of a few years, and they were nearly the last years of his life; but the last year witnessed no trace of decay, for the great Norwich painter died suddenly, and not even in very late middle age—he was only fifty-three. He etched the most important of his dated things about the time that Turner was bringing to its unfinished, premature end his labour on the *Liber*, and a full dozen years after Girtin, at the beginning of the century, had wrought on the plates of his unique series, the Views of Paris streets and Paris

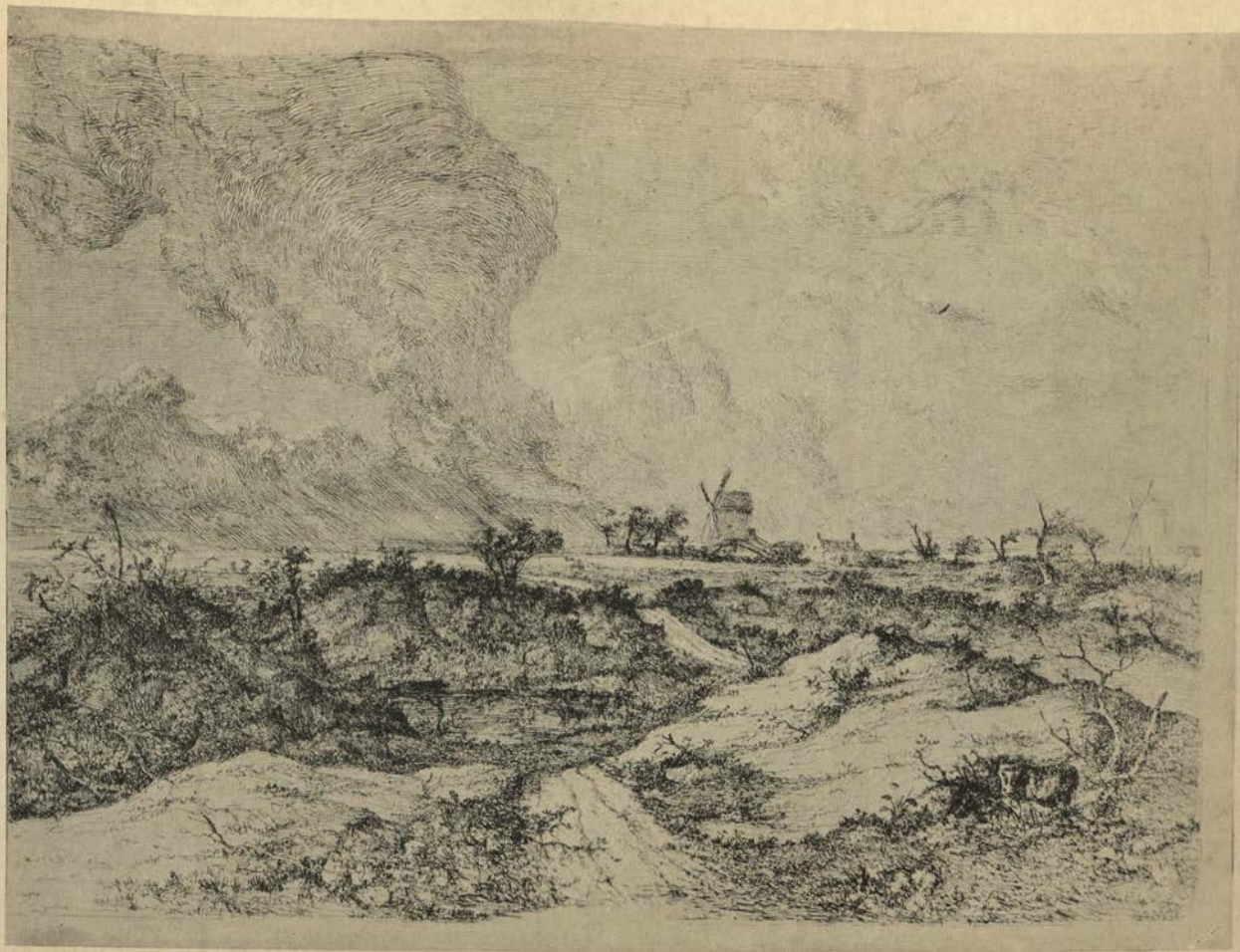
river. Crome's drawing on the copper was for his own delight and study; but when his plates had accumulated there was talk of their publication—a prospectus was issued: small, probably, was the response: the project in Crome's lifetime came to nothing—though of course a few impressions had been taken. Long after his death—not until 1834 in fact—was the first actual or the first formal issue. The Etchings were Thirty-one in number, and were announced as "printed from the plates as left by himself"—a statement mainly true, no doubt, but not at all incompatible with their being at that time no longer in their first condition. Crome, as a matter of fact, had been accustomed to bite them very lightly at first—to bite, or to get them bitten, more deeply later. The earlier impressions are of great rarity: rare too are all impressions in the states "as left by himself." What are not so rare, and what are not so desirable—the things that the Collector should avoid—are the later issues; those, that is, of the year 1838 and subsequently, with Dawson Turner's memoir of the artist. At the British Museum is to be seen an extensive collection: impressions good and bad. Some of the finest are presentations from William Smith, a dealer of high taste, of two generations ago. Others have come into the hands of the Department quite lately, and it is possible that even before these pages are in print the States of all may be found verified by reference to Mr. H. S. Theobald's comparatively new and quite authoritative book about them: a book which Mr. Theobald is careful to assure us owes much, though certainly it is far from owing all, to the extent on which he was enabled to draw on Mr. James Reeve's knowledge. But at this moment of writing there is a not unnatural and quite pardonable discrepancy between the classification of States at the

Museum and that in Mr. Theobald's Catalogue. Not to multiply instances, let me say that the plate of "Mousehold Heath" (which is the subject of an illustration here) exists at the Museum in two States, catalogued as the First and Second, whereas in Mr. Theobald's Catalogue four States figure, and it would appear that it is not the First and Second, but the Second and Fourth, that the Museum possesses. They are the two which best display the essential differences: the Second State (that which we reproduce) being that in which Crome left the copper —justly content with it—the Fourth being that in which with the attainment, by another hand, of a most superficial unity and superficial completeness (obtained, strange to say, as far as the sky at least is concerned, by an unusual process of simplification or destruction), there vanishes in truth the greater part of that which is suggestive of Crome's genius and typical of his vision. To have said this about the two is perhaps to have put the possible Collector on his guard in respect, generally, of such impressions as may come before him of Crome's Etchings. It is to have urged him to distinguish between genuine prints and prints defaced when, in the words of Mr. Theobald, Ninham and W. C. Edwards "had worked their will upon them." But I have still to define what is characteristic of Crome's work, and to name—in addition to this "Mousehold Heath" subject, which in Theobald's fine Second State is the Master's impressive *chef d'œuvre*—two or three others, amongst the most delightful examples, where, in all, forty-four prints are now catalogued.

To do this I turn to a volume I but seldom make reference to—a volume written by myself, already more than thirty years ago.[1] I said in it:—

[1] *Studies in English Art* (The First Series). Bentley: 1876.

"It is Crome's splendid work among the Norfolk coppices, among the fields studded here and there with cattle, but chiefly in the tangle of the wood, or where the wood-path winds under the rustic palings, and then through undergrowth, and out into the rising meadow, to be lost at last, a thread against the horizon sky—it is this splendid tree-work; large, massive, intricate, pictorial, never narrowly faithful alone, that gives interest and value to Crome's series of etchings. . . . There is one of them, 'At Bawburgh'—dock leaves and water-plants and a suicidal willow, drawn with keen sensitiveness and magnificent power. There is another, 'Near Hingham'—dated 1813—which, for its charm of simple things, its sense of the seclusion of the quite natural country in its daily life, stands almost next to the 'Cottage with White Palings' of Rembrandt. Of the technicalities of the art Crome was not sufficiently a master for him to rival the exquisite subtlety of distance and atmosphere in the great Dutchman's 'Cottage with Dutch Hay Barn'—on the whole the capital achievement in the art of landscape etching. But even the best of Rembrandt's etchings have no tree-drawing potent and sensitive as this of Crome's. Rembrandt has nothing of foliage as intricate as that of the untitled one of Crome's, a path through the outskirts of a wood. This is as free as the first, rarest State of Claude's 'Shepherd and Shepherdess Conversing,' and by it the best of Ruysdael's work is rivalled and the best of Waterloo's outdone. Yet Waterloo, one judges from the subjects, more than Rembrandt, was the model for Crome. And again, for the suggestion of a willow's shadowy delicacy, conveyed as well as the sturdiness and intricacy of the oak—of which Crome is the accepted portrayer—see his etching at 'Woodrising,' a company of willows reflected in a quiet pool."



MOUSEHOLD HEATH

"OLD" CROME

For all this praise, no part of which, after the passage of a generation, do I desire to withdraw, it must yet be remembered that Crome's etchings generally—to use a favourite phrase of the now long departed print-seller, Mr. Halsted—who first made a specialty of Turner—are "for the folio: not for the wall." Yes, it may well be borne in mind that, framed, they must be, for the most part, relatively ineffective. But even here there are exceptions —the "Mousehold Heath" in its true Second State, the chief of them—and again, the strength of Crome's Soft-ground prints is, in that method, unusual, and of service.

It is convenient—having spoken of Crome—to say something now of the other great Norwich master, John Sell Cotman. The refinements of the modern etcher, and, as I have said before, of Rembrandt—the refinements of which Claude gave his capital example in "Le Bouvier" —were not at any time Cotman's. Genuinely poetic in spirit, whenever he allowed to his own spirit proper vent, Cotman in his larger publications upon local Architecture, or the architecture of the Norman cities, which he had visited with Dawson Turner, was architectural draughtsman above everything. That, of course, did not prevent him, any more than it had prevented Piranesi, whom he so much admired, from obtaining a measure, sometimes even an abundance, of picturesque effect; but it is not on these elaborate chronicles that one bases one's appreciation of Cotman—or one's appreciation even of the Cotman of Black and White. One turns rather to his *Liber Studiorum*—his publication, in 1836, of Soft-ground Etchings, which have the effect of harmonious pencil drawings in which the medium—though it is a pleasure to see the medium sometimes—is not too apparent. They are chiefly of Norfolk scenes, and are of Cotman's middle

life—and by their subjects they remind one of the chalk drawings of his later years; now grand and noble, with a wealth of trees flung across sleeping water; now homely, as where a woman with stretched arms is hanging clothes in a garden-plot behind a cottage, or where a child is barked at by a dog, in a country lane. Years ago I wrote of them: "Here and there, as in the small composition called 'The Judgment of Midas,' scenes are made classical or heroic, as in Turner; but with Cotman the treatment of them is still broad and massive, rather than intricate and elaborate." The etched pieces by Cotman are not often separated from the volumes in which they appeared. They have not individually attracted the Collector. The ordinary print-seller, therefore, scarcely wots—it will be found—of Cotman's name.

A very few pieces by Wilkie—really there are only about two that are particularly memorable—and a few more by Geddes, engage the student's attention and secure his approval. The finest Wilkie—incomparably the finest—is the little genre picture, an interior, it might be called "The Bureau." The title under which it figures generally is, I think, "The Receipt." And no Collector with the chance to lay his hand upon it should let it escape him. Admirable technically, this piece has the simplicity and veracity of Wilkie's earlier paintings. It is a story told ingeniously; the entourage is interesting; and the characters are of their place and day. Reminiscent rather of Wilkie's later and more scenic art is another print that, not of course altogether without reason, won Hamerton's commendation—"The Pope examining a Censer." But it belongs to a more pretentious order of Art, and also technically it is less good.

The strength of Geddes is in his dry-points—the

portrait of his Mother, as true as Raeburn and much less prosaic, and then again, and more especially, his homely landscapes, rendered with sympathy, economy, and understanding. These are lyrics that, it may be, cost Geddes little, but that are not on that account to be undervalued. His time knew no happier etcher than Geddes, at his best, and he was never feeble; and looking at his "Halliford on Thames," and at his "Peckham Rye," I feel, of course, that they should be valued much more highly, and be more eagerly sought for, since they are really the successors of Rembrandt and the faultless precursors of Muirhead Bone.

I class with our earlier Etchers, and name him as almost the last of them, Samuel Palmer. He lived on into our own time—till 1881, that is—but then he was not young when Geddes died. In a book of reference which I have reason to fear is far too seldom "looked up"—Cassell's *Celebrities of the Century* (1887)—the "century" was the Nineteenth—there is a short but happy and correct account of him, by Richard Garnett, and to the value and art quality of the best of Palmer's not at all numerous etchings Hamerton does some justice. Having told us that Samuel Palmer was one of the most poetic of English artists, Richard Garnett continues: "He was a most attractive character: an unworldly idealist living solely for Art and Literature, the characteristics of whose mind were reflected in the classic grace and romantic conception of his works. . . . His works are invariably ideal inspirations: he does not profess to transcribe Nature, and may be taxed with mannerism; his range of subject also is not very wide; but within these limits the sentiment of a spiritual beauty immanent in Landscape has never been conveyed more impressively."

That Geddes was of the family of Rembrandt—allied to him, that is, through the rich little landscapes in dry-point which approached those of the Dutch master's later years—I have asserted already; and now, in the quotation just made, Dr. Garnett comes appropriately to imply Palmer's affinity with Claude. Italy influenced both of them: familiarity with Italy was the making of Claude—as familiarity with Provence, which represents the South as well, might have been as effectively—and Claude himself must have directly influenced Palmer. But Palmer had not the great early Frenchman's range of sentiment—his joyousness, his freedom—nor quite the magic of his technique in Etching, when that technique rose to its highest. Again, Claude, when he was most elaborate, as much as when he was most simple, retained and suggested no method but the pure etcher's own. Palmer—like Méryon, as it happens, in this matter—was in principle the original engraver. Patience and pertinacity more than the typical etcher's were his—along with something, it must needs be, of the etcher's charm. Of how much he appreciated the prints of Claude there is direct and interesting record. "Claude's execution"—Palmer wrote to Hamerton—"is of that highest kind which has no independent essence, but lingers and hesitates with the thought, and is lost and found in a bewilderment of intricate beauty." And Hamerton, writing of Palmer's work and method, almost paraphrases a portion of this eulogy. In Palmer he admires, besides, the gift of passing on to others his "sensation of richness and beauty." "The Etching"—it is the "Early Ploughman," perhaps the finest of all, that is in question—"affects us like a picture does: it is mellow and full, like work from a flowing brush." "The Herdsman" he refers to for the admirable management of its tonality. But

then, "Palmer's plates are not true etchings, relatively to the art, because they do not insist upon its special and peculiar qualities."

That is a characteristic to which I have above called attention. The point need not be laboured. Indeed, were I to continue it would be rather to assert a difference than to emphasize an agreement. Throughout a good deal of Hamerton's earlier writing—and this extract is of 1868—the influence of Haden is to be discerned. It is, besides, matter of knowledge. And the influence of Haden—never exercised in the direction of the belittlement of noble work—was exercised sometimes towards the restriction of methods in which, in a particular art, noble work might be done. Let us try to express a little differently the verdict about Palmer's etchings. For us they may be, not noble works only, but "true etchings" besides: albeit they are, like Méryon's own, true etchings wrought in a way not characteristic, invariably, of the medium to certain of whose means they had recourse.

One earlyish figure-etcher, Etcher of Genre, generally book-illustrator, deserves his brief word. That is George Cruikshank, whom Ruskin, with a most limited knowledge of the art of Etching, really ridiculously overpraised. I am not going to fall so very foul of this great writer—in his own time great guide—because he said that Etching was "a blundering Art." I much surmise that in that he referred chiefly to the uncertainties of "biting"; and the Etchings of more than one very distinguished painter testify that in this matter a "blundering Art" Etching may indeed appear. I do, however, deem that the merit of Cruikshank Ruskin vastly exaggerated—even if it be considered that the praise was addressed less to the craftsman in a particular

craft than to the inventor and the artist in alert draughtsmanship. An occasion on which the intentions were, I suppose, realized, and in which the technique more or less seconded them, presents itself to us in a "Hans of Iceland" subject—the monster in the Cave—a thing of 1825—in the Jacobite Club pursued by the guard, an episode from *The Miser's Daughter* (1842); in Herne the Hunter flying into the burning woods; in more than one performance of power in the *Oliver Twist* (notably Sikes on the Houseroof); and, lastly, a full generation later, in the pretty fancy of the Fairy Connoisseurs inspecting Frederick Locker's Collection of Drawings.

CHAPTER XIX

SEYMOUR HADEN

IN the record of the Revival of Etching, as in England we have known and seen it, Seymour Haden's ought certainly to be the most conspicuous name. His work may be equal to Whistler's, though on different lines—or it may be unequal to Whistler's. That is not the whole of the matter. The work is in any case considerable and important; individual, interesting, learned, spirited, valuable. Furthermore, it is of such a nature that without the least truckling to popularity upon the part of the artist, either in the conception or execution of his plates, Haden's work made to the English public a much prompter and more general appeal than did the work of his immortal kinsman. Whistler spoke, during so many of his years, to those only who were ready to receive a wholly unfamiliar manifestation of Fine Art—something new in vision: something new in performance—but Haden's language was "understanded of the multitude"—I mean the cultivated multitude, who knew the Classics of Design, and knew their conventions.

Nor is *that* the whole of the matter. A life prolonged to the last limits (for, as I write, Seymour Haden is ninety-two),[1] an energy scarcely even yet exhausted, a practical, business-like nature—the temperament of an artist, *doublé* with the temperament of a shrewd man

[1] And now, as I correct my proofs, I have to recollect that he is dead.—F. W.

of affairs—these have resulted in the substantial furtherance amongst us of the pursuit of the art that Haden has illustrated, and in the acceptance of it at the hands of the public, when practised not only by himself. If Seymour Haden had not been a busy, brilliant surgeon, as well as a vigorous and very diligent artist in Etching, he might have attained distinction as a Writer—I am not sure that he has not even now deserved it, so forcible and excellent is the literary form into which his printed utterances have been thrown. His gift of Style—his gift of clear, clean thought—may not have been exercised so continuously, or have been so much devoted to the particular subjects to which the reader of English expects to find it addressed, as to have won any wide recognition that here, in Seymour Haden, it did at least exist. None the less it has been efficacious in stamping more lastingly upon the public mind Seymour Haden's views upon the matters with which he was concerned. A connoisseur, versed in the Classics of Etching, and himself as able to appreciate Whistler as to appreciate Rembrandt, Claude, and Méryon, Haden has been initiator and administrator: the Royal Society of Painter Etchers—worthy official representative of the art amongst us—came into existence at his bidding. He had thought—he went on thinking—that the art of the Etcher should be represented in the Royal Academy. He would not, a generation ago, have refused the Academic honours which—comparatively lately—have been bestowed on Short and Strang. But "Rassurez vous, mon cher, vous ne serez jamais de l'Académie," Leighton had said to him. And "Rassurez vous, mon cher, je suis Président de ma propre Académie," Seymour Haden—cordial, yet on the war-path—had replied.

This *aperçu* which I have made, of his character and

place, was necessary in the first instance. And now we can turn to that great contribution to the progress and the general importance of Etching which is afforded by Seymour Haden's work.

First, the mere quantity. Cataloguing, in a volume published in 1880, the prints from Haden's needle, Sir William Drake—himself the owner of an admirable Collection of them—reached to One Hundred and Eighty-five numbers. But, in succeeding years, not a few new plates were produced, and plates that had been overlooked came to light. These circumstances led to the preparation, in 1903, of a valuable and necessary *Supplement to Sir William Drake's Catalogue*, executed by Mr. Nazeby Harrington. To this, as to the earlier volume, the artist supplied information—I have always thought, indeed, that in the earlier volume I recognized his hand in the form, terse and vivid, taken by some of the descriptions. Mr. Nazeby Harrington brought the list up to Two Hundred and Forty-one.

Then, the character of the work—its subjects; the periods of that long life of Haden's at which the memorable etchings were produced: the progress—or the change, the causes of it—all that has to be looked into. And where are we to begin? Well, subjects chosen indicate at least one thing of high importance—the direction of an artist's personal interest. We begin then, in Sir Francis Seymour Haden's case, with the nature of the subjects.

Seymour Haden is pre-eminently a Landscape Etcher. Resembling, certainly in this respect, the greater number of Etchers, Haden has chosen Landscape as the main theme of his labours. He has dealt with tracts of woodland, with isolated trees, with low-lying water-marshes, with sandy uplands, with village and quaint

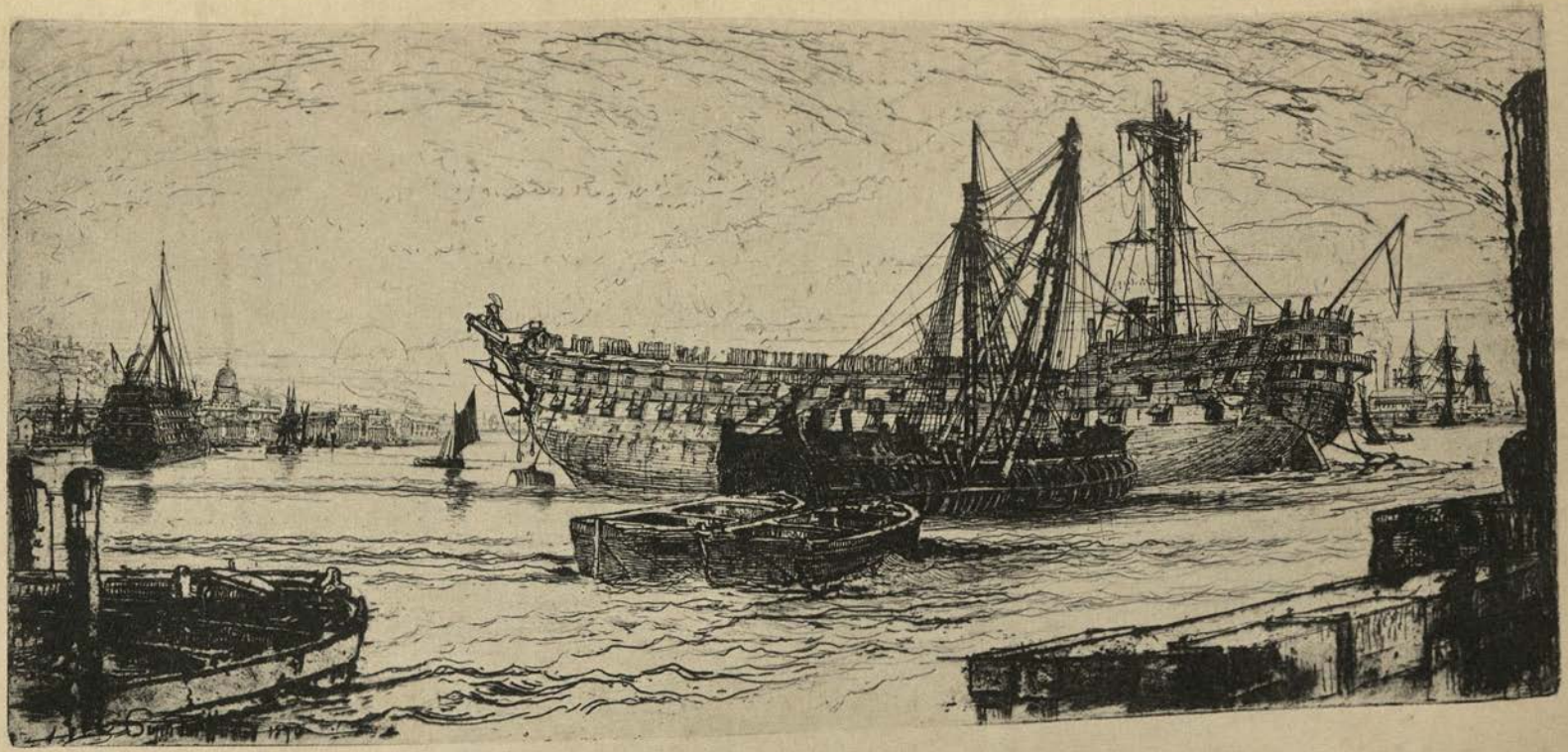
town, and with the River, in remote and sylvan parts, and in Cockneyfied suburbs, and in the broader reaches, where, far below Bridge, huge vessels ride on it, and it has a distant, low horizon, and is overarched by a great sky. Whatever the landscape be, it is always, it seems, landscape of character, and landscape that the artist has enjoyed. Abroad, little has been done by him but a group, grimly impressive, of Spanish places—Burgos, perhaps, the chief—a single etching of Amsterdam (tribute to the city where the greatest Etcher that the world has known lived and worked), and an early-morning vision of the long, low lines of Calais, as they appeared from the deck of the approaching steamboat that was bearing Haden to France. These labours, these landscape studies, records, impressions—have been diversified by a few figure pieces, of which the most successful is the plate—and that is at once curiously elegant as well as decisive—which translates freely into economical line a painting by Wright of Derby: the portrait of a youthful Haden, of something like or something more than a century ago, who in process of time was to become one of the distinguished Etcher's progenitors.

But more important even than the question of the subjects of Seymour Haden's Etchings is the question of their character; and in their character no virtue is more manifest than the virtue of spontaneity. Haden's prints, as a whole—I am not speaking of the finest of them—have, indeed, the "defects" of that "quality," as well as its merit. His etching stops generally where the brilliant or spirited sketch stops—the sketch that comes of a few moments' observation, but that is backed undoubtedly by a store of previous knowledge: the sketch firm and brilliant, but at the same time rapid. Seymour

Haden has put into practice just those principles which in the work of Rembrandt, that he has studied so closely, he discussed most readily and valued the most. After all, it does not come to very much more than this—that, dealing with Etching, he has wrung from it generally the effects most specially vouchsafed to it: he has taken advantage of its possible economy, of its power of swift suggestiveness: he has never, at all events, employed it to realize the ends to which other methods of Engraving might be directed more appropriately: he has asked from it its own fruits, and not the fruits which ripen for the elaborate line engraver. Still, even in this respect, the range of method is considerable. The rich dry-point effect of "Windmill Hill," No. 1—doubtless one of the best of the group which, at a period comparatively late, dealt, in a fashion just as masterly as it was seemingly summary, with the homely and uneventful landscape, the *terrain accidenté* of Dorset—was preceded by work of as remarkable a unity, and of a far greater elaboration—and yet, of course, broad withal—I am referring to the best known, the most distinctly, and at the same time the most justifiably, popular of all this master's pieces: the "Agamemnon"—the warship with a history, ending its days on the Thames. The "Agamemnon" set Dr. Propert at work, and Dr. Propert was an amateur of a certain intelligence, who laboured assiduously upon a not discreditable performance of a not dissimilar task. It crept too, unmistakably, into an early plate by a Scottish artist of much deeper imagination and much subtler skill (I mean Mr. D. Y. Cameron): the plate referred to is one for which in his younger days Mr. Cameron received the enterprising commission of the Messrs. Connell—and well did he *se tirer d'affaire*.

But, of course, nothing that the "Agamemnon" merely

or mainly inspired approached that splendid achievement of Seymour Haden's maturity—his own great plate—a plate which combines so many virtues, and in which I confess I do not discern a fault. Its composition—at once more elaborate and more hidden than the cheaper devices that do duty for composition in many of the pieces that win popularity in these latter days—betrays, to him who is equipped with knowledge to read below the surface, Seymour Haden's familiarity with Classic, with orthodox Design. And technically, also, the plate is perfect. The baulks of floating timber; the light breeze of a brilliant evening touching into long wavelet and ripple the waters of a tidal river; the abandoned warship in mid-distance; the low-lying shore, with the horizon-line; and then the flecked sky, one of the few great skies of all the Masters of Etching—a sky whose success is to be likened only to that of the skies in Rembrandt's "Three Trees," in his "Landscape with a Ruined Tower," in Claude's "Cattle Going Home in Stormy Weather," and in another piece of Seymour Haden's own, "Sunset on Thames"—*all* these things, I say, that might have fought with each other so much, are, in the "Agamemnon," cunningly blent into unity. Fine generalship has controlled them, and each has fulfilled entirely its appointed task. Quite right, for once—let it be said again—has the purchasing public shown itself in esteeming this plate as the most important and delightful of Seymour Haden's work. It must remain a source of astonishment that P. G. Hamerton assigned the foremost place to another piece by the Master. P. G. Hamerton too!—who, in the earlier days of his keen interest in Etching, learnt from Haden so much, and who brought, through all his life, to the assimilation of that which he had learnt, the equipment of a wide sympathy. I know, of course, that the



THE AGAMEMNON

SEYMOUR HADEN

great print I love did not exist when there appeared the first edition of *Etching and Etchers;* but a high appreciation might have been bestowed on it in subsequent issues, for, really, the "Agamemnon" is among the great etchings of the world.

Two or three other landscapes of Haden's deserve, perhaps, special mention. One of them is "Combe Bottom"—an early success. Another is "Whistler's House at Old Chelsea," a plate breezy with realism, and yet composed with learning. The theme is really the whole river-front of Western Chelsea in those days. Another is "The Water Meadow," a piece whose excellence reveals to us the true lover of the country, content to be concerned with it at no particularly chosen moment, and to demand from it the possession of no very obvious charm. The quiet truth suffices: the well-established character. Then there is "Mytton Hall," for its intimate homeliness and dignity; "Windmill Hill," which I have named already—a yet homelier and in itself more formless fragment of an everyday land, but indeed a masterpiece; then "Sunset on Thames," in which clouds gather round the setting orb, and there is light reflected on the leagues of water, while, under a pageant of sunset, the river craft are speeding on their way. These, certainly, are leading examples, and, in addition, they are types.

As to dates, "Mytton Hall" was wrought in 1859; "Combe Bottom" in 1860; the fine if overpraised "Shere Mill Pond" in the same year—it was first exhibited, Mr. Harrington tells us, under the pseudonym of H. Dean; "Whistler's House: Old Chelsea" was worked in 1863; "Sunset on Thames" in 1865; and, in the same year, "Erith Marshes"—a fine, broad thing on zinc. On zinc too is the beautiful "Battersea Reach." Then

to the year 1870 belongs "The Agamemnon," and to 1877 —the beginning of the last period and of the last style —the rich and pregnant little dry-point "Wind-mill Hill." The tendency to increased breadth in work, as time proceeds, is shown in Haden both by choice of material and by choice of medium. Zinc, the "material," though used indeed once at least rather early, in the "Erith Marshes," was used increasingly later. Dry-point, the "medium," was characteristic mainly of that later output.

And, in regard to this tendency towards breadth, as time proceeded, and as Seymour Haden's familiarity with his art increased, the connoisseur will not need to be reminded—but the novice may none the less be informed —that the tendency has characterized most of the great Etchers, from Rembrandt downwards. It is not to be discovered in all of them, however. It is not marked in Claude among the Classics. Nor, I think, in Vandyke. And in the case of Whistler, the research for breadth, as almost a dominant aim, is to be associated with, at all events, nothing later than the penultimate stage of his amazingly varied labours—hardly even with that, perhaps; for, with him, it is discernible in chief in what is known as his "Leyland period." But Whistler was a law unto himself, and, more notably than any other, an "exception"—*les artistes sont des exceptions*—at the beginning, as at the end.

It is to the discussion of Whistler, in some approach to systematic fashion, that we shall shortly, but not immediately, pass.

CHAPTER XX

SHORT AND STRANG

AT one or two points only is there likeness, at many there is great dissimilarity, apparent in the artists whom we here consider together—Frank Short and William Strang. There is, however, a certain convenience in associating them. They are the two most prominent English Etchers or Engravers who stand between the generation of Haden and Whistler and the generation of Cameron and Muirhead Bone. The record of the first of their substantial achievements goes back to days beyond the recollection of our younger amateurs—to days when ideals in Etching, not at this moment quite so much in evidence, were in fashion, or "in the air" (put it which way we will). Also, there may be a certain piquancy in considering together two talents, and, more particularly, two natures, so different. And that such differences should be—and should be visible so plainly—says something for the Art's range. For in the same Art has each man expressed himself.

Here, however, it must be remembered that while one man has been occupied, these thirty years or more, entirely with what is called "original" Etching—the search for and the discovery of his theme in Nature or his own imagination (I am not forgetting that he has painted too, and drawn, and always, nominally, "out of his own head," or "off his own bat"), the other has alternated with original Etching the production of plates translating

the conceptions of various men—and that, too, only in part by the process of the aquafortist: in great measure by the perfect practice of Mezzotint. Thus are made evident, at once, radical differences: the dogged pursuit by Mr. Strang of a purpose Time has not modified: the range, the width of sympathy of Sir Frank Short—his extraordinary and most refreshing flexibility, both of mind and hand.

And if we were obliged to tackle here—very seriously to address ourselves to—the difficult and not particularly gracious inquiry, "Which of these two artists is the more original?" we should be a little puzzled: certain confusions would have to be cleared up—account taken of "nominal" originality (to repeat a word I have but just now found convenient), and of an originality essential rather than nominal. It might be that the artist who has frankly, in so much of his work, interpreted others and suppressed all of himself except his consummate craftsmanship, would yet, by reason of that smaller part of his work which is his own altogether, be pronounced the more original personality. Short, who can enter so completely into the spirit and the handling of Turner and of Constable, of Dewint and G. F. Watts, becomes himself entirely, in conception, in vision, in performance, when he addresses himself to some natural scene. And Strang, who, so far as I know, has never once translated the work of another on to a copper which makes no pretension to be classed among creative art, is found, in his original work, to be a constant borrower—even if an unconscious and often an interesting one. He has around him a vast array of debt: debt to Holbein: debt to the sterner and less sympathetic of the Renaissance Italians: debt, most of all, perhaps—though it was chiefly years ago that this great obligation was incurred—to that tender Ancient

Master of our own earlier day—that great Frenchman, living here in England his life so undisturbed and separate: Alphonse Legros.

But this is a matter we need not affect finally to pronounce upon; and it is obvious that were inquiry confined to the surface of things—and in England the dilettante, in Art of any kind, pictorial or literary, generally prefers that it should be—the palm for originality would rest with Mr. Strang, and his creations, impressive and interesting, grim and "dour."

Strang has been extraordinarily prolific. Hundreds of plates—landscapes and figure pieces, allegory and realism—have been chronicled by Mr. Laurence Binyon—a grave, noteworthy personality: a serious, thoughtful student—in just such a volume as it is apparently at present (witness, for instance, the vast book which displays the performances of Mr. Brangwyn) the fondest aim of the ambitious, pertinacious Etcher to know is in existence about him. Far am I from saying that amongst these hundreds of pieces—amongst these "many inventions"—there are not numerous examples of Mr. Strang's capacity to entertain visions of Beauty. His dreams—that come to him so constantly: that come nearly as easily as words do to a Welshman—his dreams are really not quite all of them nightmares. He has etched—and it is well known that he has also drawn—dignified and attractive portraits. In Etching perhaps, as certainly in the medium of chalks, he has—and it is probable during the last few years especially—condescended to make studies, and studies not in sentiment altogether chilly, of the comely figure. We used to see in Mr. Strang's figure-pieces only the grotesque and the repugnant; only the warped and gnarled. These still play their conspicuous parts: they are the Hamlets of his tragedy: others

are the Laertes and Ophelias. With their author, a sympathy with the poor could, of old time, hardly exist without a preference for the ungainly. But, of late years, between good looks and Mr. Strang a *modus vivendi* has somehow been arrived at.

In landscape, Mr. Strang's dreams, or waking visions, take him often among the earlier Classics of Design. That fact—and something, I believe, which is his own, to boot—makes for the preservation of dignity in his work. And if you are never able to say of Mr. Strang's landscape, "It is in Surrey" or "In Nottinghamshire"—if you have to say, pretty constantly, instead, "It is a medley from this source and that"—yet you feel it is somehow a medley that does invite attention: a world singular indeed, and weird, but sometimes not a little memorable, not a little impressive, and to which, not simply through a reverent adaptation now of Rembrandt, now of Legros, and now of this or that Italian, Mr. Strang has obtained "spiritual right" of entry. For, with all his borrowings, conscious or unconscious—with all his accumulated debt—Mr. Strang has also (the dramatic figure-pieces show it perhaps most conclusively) a gift of initiation. He is, at times, even richly imaginative. And in the command of technique—and here it is that he and Sir Frank Short a good deal resemble each other—in the command of technique, to carry out whatever his particular purposes may be, Mr. Strang is seldom at fault. In studying Sir Frank and Mr. Strang, we are studying, certainly, two great craftsmen.

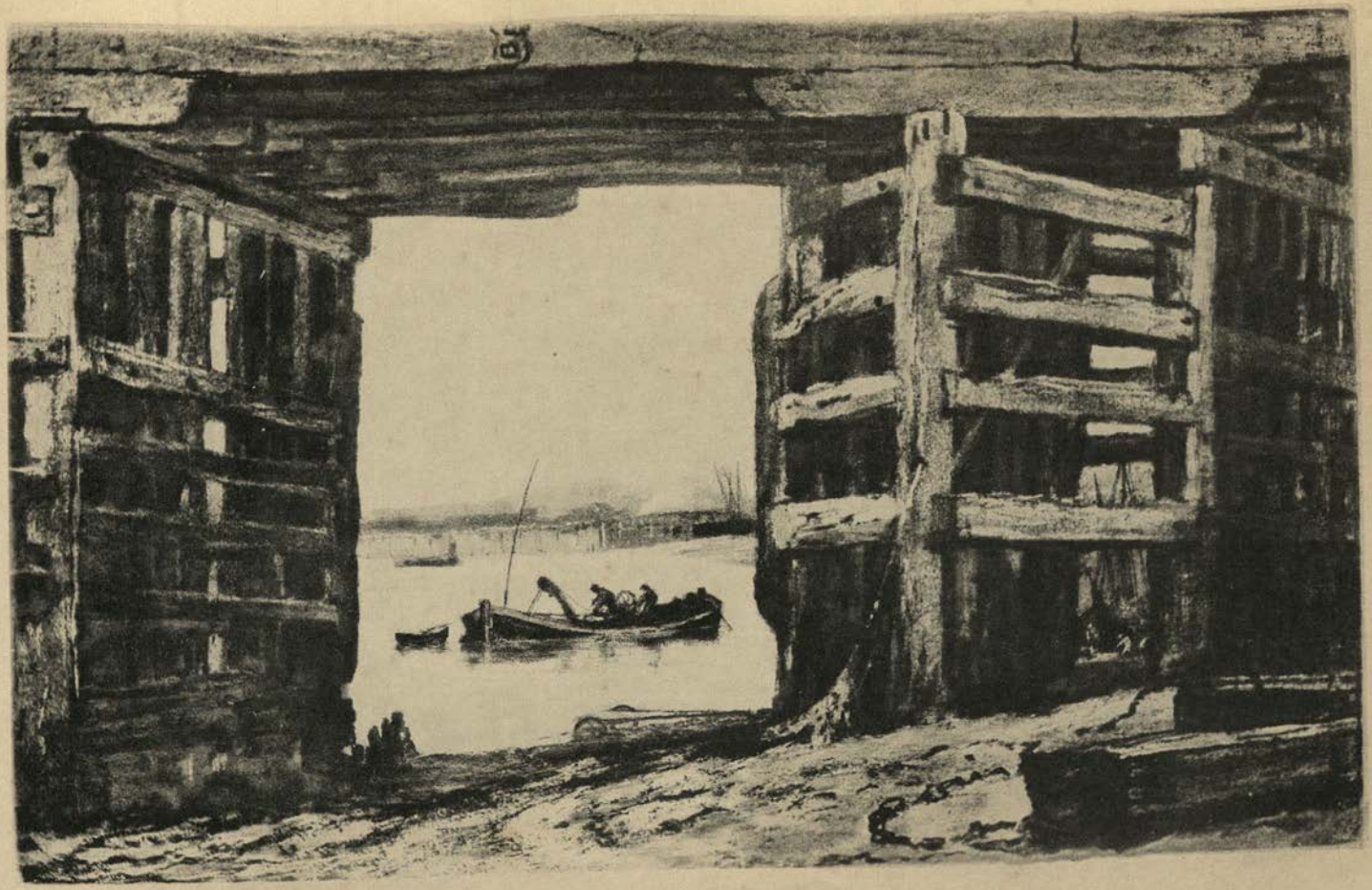
Frank Short now claims attention in detail. It seems to me that he was born dexterous, and born, too, with the clear and pleasant vision which he has always retained. If one looks back into his earliest work—and some of the

earliest was statedly original—there is little in it of mistake or of uncertainty: the steps are prudent and restricted, but they are not false. Take the little early drypoint, "Grey Morning, Whitby"—you find reticence, but scarcely feebleness. And take an early work in which he interprets the conception of another—the "Redcliffe Church, Bristol": in the etched state and in the state with mezzotint added. There will be found in that, and most especially in the etched part of it, a firm intention, skilfully enough executed. We need not claim for it—or for "Grey Morning"—subtlety, complexity; but to it there must be accorded the possession of workmanlike quality. Ably it records the building and the scene; ably, too, the work of water-colour draughtsman's art which has itself recorded these. The drawing claims to be Cotman's. Judging it from the translation by our contemporary etcher, it has at least affinity with Cotman's broad, massive, dignified, somewhat simplified labour. But I am not aware of any excursion made to the West of England by this great Norwich master. Cotman drew in Norfolk, Lincolnshire, and the North Riding, and in Normandy, and, in later years, when he was settled in London, he, who loved river subjects, could not avoid some outlying places on the Thames. Twickenham, Kew, Chiswick, knew his presence. Did ever Bristol?

These early pieces, and a few others, had not long been done when Frank Short came into his own, completely. Perhaps he had already come into his own—one thinks it must be said he had—when he executed the simple, and probably unpopular plate, "Wrought Nails"—for that, in its own way, is masterly. "Wrought Nails"—a bit of Stourbridge life and landscape (Sir Frank comes from that region)—is quite as fine, as is another not so rare, better known, and oftener cited piece:

"Wintry Blast on the Stourbridge Canal." It is a bare, spoilt, dreary landscape, with just the touch of homeliness, withal, that saves it—a cottage or a workshed; thin and bare scattered trees; a formless slope—a choice only, between the dreariness and almost squalor that is above it, and the dreariness and almost squalor that is below. Whistler would have admired—probably did admire, for he knew the value of Short, and hung his Etchings where he could—Whistler did probably admire "Wrought Nails," its economy of means, its delicate decisiveness of hand.

The qualities that have been named, this moment—economy and delicate decisiveness—are among the characteristics, generally, of Short's work. They are very specially the characteristics, not alone of that too little seen plate, "Wrought Nails," but of a whole group done not so long after it—prints all of them with motives found at Bosham, of which the two very finest, and they are masterpieces, are "Evening, Bosham" and "Waiting for the *Flood*." To mud-banks and a shelving shore, never before in any art was such poetry given—and it is given unconsciously, through happy lightness and through firmness of touch backing up and making expressive pure clarity of vision. And to this favourite and favoured theme—the shelving shore—Short has returned, almost lately, with less of unity of purpose, but of course with skill and interest, in "The Mooring Stones, Polperro." Then, a little later than the Bosham prints, there is the noble and, one may say, the somehow pathetic plate that records an evening aspect of the long pier of Rye. Later still, appreciably, "Gathering the Flock on Maxwell Bank"—a Lancashire or Cheshire study; or is it nearer to the Scottish Border country?—in any case, it is what Mr. E. F. Strange has called it—"one of the finest examples of the possibilities



A SPAN OF OLD BATTERSEA BRIDGE

FRANK SHORT

of the soft-ground process that has ever been done." Then, among Short's later Dutch subjects, there is the "Unloading Peat, Dort"—the charm not so much in the barge, which is a prominent object, as in the quaint house-fronts. Again, the "Beach Buoy" Etching—late enough to be numbered 174 in Mr. Strange's Catalogue—is, while simple, perfectly pictorial. A delightful little thing is "Quarter-Boys" (round, half-angelic urchins that strike the quarters in the bell-tower of Rye). There is a plate of kindred theme, "The Dijk Bell." Last, one may mention two pieces, both of them a little *hors ligne:* one of them by its subject—"A Venetian Lamp." It is a Jacquemart or a Courtry, say—just as is Cameron's "Little Lady of Luxor." And the other stands, not alone indeed, but in a small minority, by reason of its process—a process, needless to say, which Short has thoroughly mastered. That is the aquatint, strong, quiet, simple, and a most desirable possession—"A Span of Old Battersea Bridge"—on which, in the last chapter of this volume, it happens that I shall have to speak again.

The scheme of my book does not include the liberty of more than slight and almost incidental reference to the wonderful work of translation—to the important bulk and splendid quality of that interpretative labour which has engaged Short so largely. Just now and then this work of translation has been done in Etching purely: then, in the great realizations of Turner's *Liber* drawings, or *Liber* prints, in the necessary and wholesome combination, dictated by Turner's own practice, of Etching and of Mezzotint: then, in the translations of the noble figure-pieces of Watts, as in those of one or two Down visions of Constable's, and of a whole group in which are caught the manly characteristics—the simplicity and strength—of Dewint's Water Colour, by unalloyed or unassisted

mezzotint, worthy of McArdell, or Earlom, or William Ward, or David Lucas.

Short's Present is a Present of enviable success. And it leaves his Future—and his place with Posterity—unmortgaged and assured.

CHAPTER XXI

FITTON AND HAIG

SOMETHING like twenty years of labour assiduous, elaborate, broad withal, and not unduly plentiful, have confirmed in Mr. Hedley Fitton, as draughtsman and etcher, the possession of a talent never even at the beginning obviously imitative, or obviously derived. He is one of the comparatively few artists who in a medium by no means generally popular—I mean the medium of Etching—has achieved such an acceptance as is not far removed from popularity; and it is without substantial concessions—it is by reason, I think, of his own natural bent of mind and work—that Mr. Fitton has conciliated so much of public favour. This good fortune he has in common with a veteran artist of very different labours—Mr. Axel Haig: an artist who, with equal unconsciousness or equal incapacity for the mere search for popularity, has more—yes, decidedly more—of popular appeal, and attracts less than Mr. Fitton does—and less, I sometimes think, than is his due—the sympathy of the advanced, the "modern" Collector, the Collector *dans le mouvement.*

Of Mr. Haig it will be my business to speak later, with perhaps no accent of personal enthusiasm, but with a measure of respect that is not invariably accorded him. We are occupied first with the younger artist: a man the years of whose life number about fifty. Hedley Fitton has been a Member of the Royal Painter Etchers

since 1902, and in 1907 the Société des Artistes Français gave him a gold medal. By far the best opportunity thus far afforded of studying his work, of different periods and in somewhat different classes, was that afforded in January, 1910, by an Exhibition at Mr. Robert Dunthorne's. There were some Thirty Etchings there, and some ten pencil drawings. Of the latter, not a bad one recorded the interior of St. Remy, Dieppe; but much the best—a drawing learned and subtle, and in the latter quality perhaps surpassing his etched work—was one of the "Cour du Dragon," a quaint bit of Paris, known to Whistler and loved by him.

As for the Etchings—the Exhibition's *raison d'être*, and the cause too, most visibly, of this my mention of Mr. Fitton in the present volume—I can give no fairer account of them than by transcribing here most of the notes that in a long and careful visit I made in my copy of the Catalogue. Along, I hope, with reasonable appreciation—a recognition of strength—they will be found to indicate not always eulogy: not always even a very limited approval.

"Barge Builders, Limehouse," a plate not specially characteristic, was noted as a "good large sketch." "The Monument" was found a little theatrical in light and shade, and in the distribution of its pictorial interest or the too anxious search for it. In "The Horse Guards" I seemed to see something like faulty perspective in figures in the foreground; but all the treatment of the building, and especially that of its façade in middle-distance, appeared excellent. "London Bridge," too, is well drawn; though not for the first time the light and shade appear a little forced; the troubled waters, too, a little undefined: their confusion not perhaps purposely inextricable. "The Rialto, Venice" is not alone, if I

judge rightly, in having, along with that which is no doubt striking, more, much more, of capacity than inspiration; for "Bar Gate, Southampton," dramatic too, is likewise exaggerated—out of the subject too much is wrenched, and the kingdom of Art is not to be taken by violence.

Pass to the pieces—one or two of them very familiar to me—of which the mental impression—say rather the conviction—is favourable entirely. "Rue St. Romain, at Rouen" belongs to this group. But more conspicuous in it is "St. Merri, Paris": quite one of the best prints: it is this partly for the expressiveness of the drawing; partly too because while the extremes of light and shade are not omitted, a greater, juster, more effective place than usual is assigned to the middle passages, to shadows, that is, that are luminous, and to lights that are not vivid. "Pulteney Bridge, Bath"—large, important, yet not vast, and never at any point empty—is, both as conception and as workmanship, excellent entirely—within the limits of the personality of the artist. We note the swirl of the Avon: we note the calmly Classic and vigorously expressed beauty of those absolutely unpretentious houses on the bridge. The spirit of old Bath—the Bath of its chief architect, Wood—is in this manly and companionable, this living and effective work. Last, careful note should be taken of the print known—naturally known—as "The Rose Window, Notre Dame." The window is interpreted with an extraordinary skill. This piece, with those that I have praised the most, breaks the otherwise too apparent uniformity, or at least similarity, of Mr. Fitton's conceptions: it shows the departure of an interesting and valuable artist upon a justified and novel quest.

Axel Haig—Hedley Fitton's senior by half a genera-

tion—is a Swede who has lived long in England, and has wandered and worked in many a medieval town. Great Gothic buildings, elaborate and ornate, impressive in richness, are the things that have most occupied his needle. Endowed with an architect's training, and with ready appreciation of the picturesque, Haig has expressed correctly, with fullness and with skill, a widely diffused, everyday vision of beauty, rather than a vision individual and peculiar. People—almost the ordinary public with decently intelligent appreciation of the objects he portrays—have been, as has been indicated before, almost from the first prepared to receive his work. Thus he has drawn into the net, or fold, of the lovers and collectors of Etchings, some, doubtless, who have remained to extend the range of their receptiveness. That has been part of his service, and it must have been a part specially welcome to him as an artist of generous sympathies—curiously and happily broad in his capacity to enjoy work that seems to most of us entirely unlike that part of his own which has the most of public favour. But it must be remembered also that Mr. Haig's labours have not been, quite so much as is supposed, persistently in a familiar groove. His aquatint of Stockholm lying out upon the waters—stately, serene, in tender light—is perhaps the best and the most fascinating, but it is not the only instance of his success in fields with which his work is not customarily associated. And, to boot, this painstaking, generally capable craftsman deserves that it should be remembered of him that he it was who brought into the world of Etching that audacious genius, justified of his works, Anders Zorn.

CHAPTER XXII

CAMERON

D. Y. CAMERON, a vigorous middle-aged man to-day, is certainly, of living British etchers, the one whose work excites amongst the generally cultivated public the keenest curiosity, and evokes the highest admiration. An even wider approval, if from a different audience, may attend upon the utterance of the veteran Axel Haig, and a more exact if narrower connoisseurship bestows its suffrages on Muirhead Bone. But Cameron is the representative etcher. North of the Tweed he is more, even, than the representative etcher. There, not only by reason of his noblest prints, but also for his far less notable but still poetic work in Water Colour, he is far upon the way to be accounted the representative artist. We here are to consider him—and the task is a sufficient one—as the maker of original engravings.

It is about a quarter of a century since D. Y. Cameron had first in hand an etching-needle. The earliest of his recognized labours shows marked immaturity, uncertainty, and even a little imitativeness. For my own part—now that such great things have been accomplished—I could wish that this earlier labour, which was preparation and training rather than achievement, had been oftener suppressed. The massacre of the Innocents, the slaying of the First-born, is a manifestation of energy and judgment with which, in all the Arts,

I have more than a sneaking sympathy. What the world wants, in this late day, is masterpieces—complete accomplishment—and few men begin with masterpieces. None the less must we appreciate the insight which led Mr. Silva White, a Glasgow print-seller, fully a score of years ago, to discern the promise—for that is what it was—in those first things of Cameron's, thin and halting as they may now appear to us. They were steps upon the way. A step upon the way, also, was the large, faithful, eminently conscientious copper which the Messrs. Connell, in days almost as early, commissioned of this then promising Scotsman.

It was only a few years later—only two or three years, perhaps, for I am not sure that it was not in 1890—that in "The Highland Kitchen" and the "Greenock" came the first excellent things. Two little studies of warehouses on the Thames are weaker, distinctly. Then there was the Dutch Set; not without traces still of a Whistlerian influence—the influence of Whistler's earlier manner—but with much in it also that was of noteworthy independence, and with one summary and admirable and wholly independent vision of landscape—the piece called "Storm: Sunset": a little thing, nobly imaginative. Its scene is a Dutch plain—or its scene is the torn sky. And then, from '94 to '96, fine things came pretty quickly; for there was the North Italian Set—which Mr. W. B. Paterson (Cameron has been fortunate in his dealers) had promptly the sagacity to believe in. The North Italian Set is a very considerable Set, and one in which the standard generally is high, for in it "Tintoret's House" seems scarcely above the average of the particular group; and in it is a Genoese subject, which may be accounted a forerunner of the "Loches," or the "St. Gervais," only a little less impressive; and in it,

too, is "The Wine Farm," a rare thing, which, seen in a picked impression, dark in the foreground, and with a distance of gem-like luminosity, vies absolutely in splendour, or shall we say in success, with the austere "Siena" of a somewhat later day. To this Set, too, belongs what is perhaps the most important, what is certainly the most gracious, of Cameron's few figure-subjects: that slim, symmetrical, restrained "Veronica": a "Maid of Italy" who looks out upon us with placid and welcoming eyes.

After the North Italian Set, came, in the very year of the "Siena," the London Set, which Mr. Richard Gutekunst commissioned. I think one used to rate that Set, as a whole, too highly. But it contains at least three plates which must always be favourites: the "Admiralty," the "Custom House"—that is so coldly reticent, so rightly prosaic, yet with a touch of elegance, a lightness of hand not common in Cameron's labour—and, last and best, the "Newgate," with its grim truth of fact, and truth of imagination besides: a piece of sombre unity—that dark door with its shadow of a thousand tragedies. But these things are the exceptions. Cameron was never for long together under the spell of London; as is shown partly by his having engaged in its interpretation with an eye and mind mainly too much directed to its great architectural features. Where he leaves these, his effects are often insignificant. Of course the Set interested us, and, in exceptional pieces, charmed—but Cameron has got beyond it as a whole, both in later Sets, or groups, and isolated performances.

Apart from isolated performances, there are three groups still to be noticed. The first of them is the group of Etchings—formal Set it never was—done in Touraine, Anjou, and the Blésois—done in that Western Central France with which, in more senses than one, and very

visibly in Architecture, Scotland has something in common. The spell cast by those lands of always dignified and definite, not too remote Romance, Cameron felt strongly, and admirably rendered. Of Tours itself, his plate of the "Place Plumereau" is a clever, though not particularly impressive vision. With the absolutely recent "Beauvais," charged at once with a tasteful realism and a weird romance, it will compare but ill. For pure delicacy, for pure subtlety of draughtsmanship, does anything surpass the modest little "Angers"? For "Chinon," the disposition and the very form of the buildings, assisted by the etcher's consciously effective arrangement of the chiaroscuro, ensure success. More obviously striking, perhaps, is the "Loches," in which Mr. Cameron—who has never, so far as I can know, in the very least rendered or perceived the lighter elegance of the French Eighteenth Century—reaches, in his treatment of the French Renaissance, about high-water mark. And, last, the great interior—excelled only perhaps by one interior of his latest time, "The Five Sisters of York"—that vision of the narrow, lofty choir of St. Laumer at Blois.

After these there is the group—the distinct Set this time, though the pieces that belong to it are now very seldom found together—of Paris plates. It ranges from that at first simple-looking little piece—I claim for it neither grace nor symmetry of composition—which is yet, almost as much as if it were a Méryon, a symbol of mystery, a summary of mood—it is a record of the *cul de sac* or the deserted by-way—the group ranges, I say, from this simplicity, in its own fashion subtle, to a piece like the "St. Gervais," profoundly and immediately and yet quite permanently impressive (again a high-water mark, and therefore a possession to be desired, obtained, and strongly cherished), or to the "St. Germain L'Auxer-

rois," a delicate and faithful study of a beauty of proportion and ornament.

And last, as regards Sets, there is the Belgian Set, commissioned years ago by Messrs. Connell—worked upon, left, resumed, then finally, and only in the spring of 1907, brought to completion. Before I actually saw it, Cameron had occasion, it so happened, to write to me about it. And he said of these Belgian etchings—in which, now that I know them, I give to the Bruges subjects and to "Damme" the highest rank—"They are all of them *more or less* 'important.' . . . I think they are all *severer* in character than formerly. But the apparent hardness of earlier plates has given place to something more suggestive of colour, rather than of light and shade only. Into all, as you suppose, Dry-point creeps more and more. The change is not the result of any settled policy, but only inevitable, because of my desire to add more glamour."

In the main, what he said then is true of the etched work produced by Cameron within the three years that have followed. That work, never deficient in quality—nay, in such very different pieces as the "Robert Lee's Workshop" (a homely interior, transfigured by its light) and "The Five Sisters of York" (that marvellous window of the Minster's North Transept, beheld behind the foreground of long stretched pavement and vast clustered column) reaching in power and unity and beauty the very summit of the artist's performance—that etched work of the last three years is, I say, in quantity lamentably deficient. "Hélas! Milord se livre à d'autres préoccupations!"—as the French expert said of the English peer who slackened in his ambition to collect improper volumes. But, for Cameron, there is opportunity to retrieve himself. And just lately the result of his Egyptian sojourn shows him

breaking new ground—breaking it, however, for the moment, less well in essays at the record of Egyptian landscape and building than in a certain little "side-show," an excursion into Still-Life, such as Jacquemart would have commended—a piece indeed that would hold its own amongst the triumphs in like kind won by Jacquemart's own hand—I am referring to the interpretation of that most ancient *objet d'art* which it has pleased Cameron to christen "The Little Lady of Luxor."

The student notices that a very small part of the etched work of Cameron deals with landscape, and that a yet smaller part is concerned at all with the human figure as its main interest and motive. Cameron is not a great figure-draughtsman. In his earlier pieces it was already something when it could be said that he had introduced his figures without detriment to the general effect. Expressive they rarely were. But he was too alert to take long in understanding that what was lacking most conspicuously must be supplied. That has been to a certain extent accomplished. Seldom of late have Cameron's figures—subordinate almost always—failed to fulfil their reasonable service. And it has been already noted that upon one or two occasions when face or figure, either in actual life ("Veronica") or in some primitive Art ("The Little Lady of Luxor") has been all the motive of the print, the print has had a success—appealing, not to all the world indeed, but to the connoisseur.

Cameron's work in other mediums than Etching has shown much more abundantly than Etching has shown his interest in Landscape. It may be he considers other mediums more fitted to express those things in Landscape which most touch him personally; for, with the etched landscape of Rembrandt and of Claude within his knowledge, he cannot have doubted the capacity of Etching to

THE FIVE SISTERS OF YORK

D. Y. CAMERON

express the noblest ideals of a landscape-draughtsman. But, to adventures of his own of much more doubtful success, the Collector owes it to him to remember to add the accomplishment of "The Border Tower." That was in times long gone. To his early time, too, belongs the success of "Storm: Sunset"—on which I have already commented—and to almost the later, the stately grace of "The Avenue."

These more or less isolated successes in Etched Landscape and figure-work confirm one in the conviction that Architecture is this artist's real theme. But this artist is so much poet as well as craftsman that it must be Architecture seen romantically: Architecture fantastic or ornate or weird or menacing—Architecture constantly in association with human life and human memory. Cameron's numerous architectural pieces have none of them the able Piranesi's mere picturesqueness or mere accuracy, any more than they have Muirhead Bone's controlled, refined, convincing realism, or Whistler's exquisite and half-irresponsible grace. It is to Méryon's mind—so great and lofty—that Cameron's is humbly akin. But with the likeness there are a hundred differences. For, if here and there a piece of Mr. Cameron's recalls, though it cannot repeat, the serene radiance of the "Abside," and another brings to mind for a moment the sinister impressiveness of the "Rue des Mauvais Garçons," with its

> Child, gather garments round thee: pass, nor pry,

how much there is of his architectural interpretation that is purely Romantic, and how much, too, that has the austerity of the Middle Ages and of the bitter North!

Cameron is always earnest—grimly earnest at times. That is another way of saying that he is never superficial. It cannot be declared that he is never mannered, and to know him well is to find out his limitations. Two classes

of Architecture have escaped his full sympathy. One finds no record, one discovers no evidence, of a profundity of joy in Classic form and faultlessness; nor—as I have implied already—is it to Cameron that one looks for fine appreciation of the Petit Trianon's measured simplicity, its subtle and elusive grace. Lastly, the Etchings of Cameron are never—or hardly ever—sketches. Broadly speaking, each piece of his is a deliberate, closely planned engraving; and even when you feel the thing may have been conceived in ardour, you know that he has wrought it out with studious effort.

CHAPTER XXIII

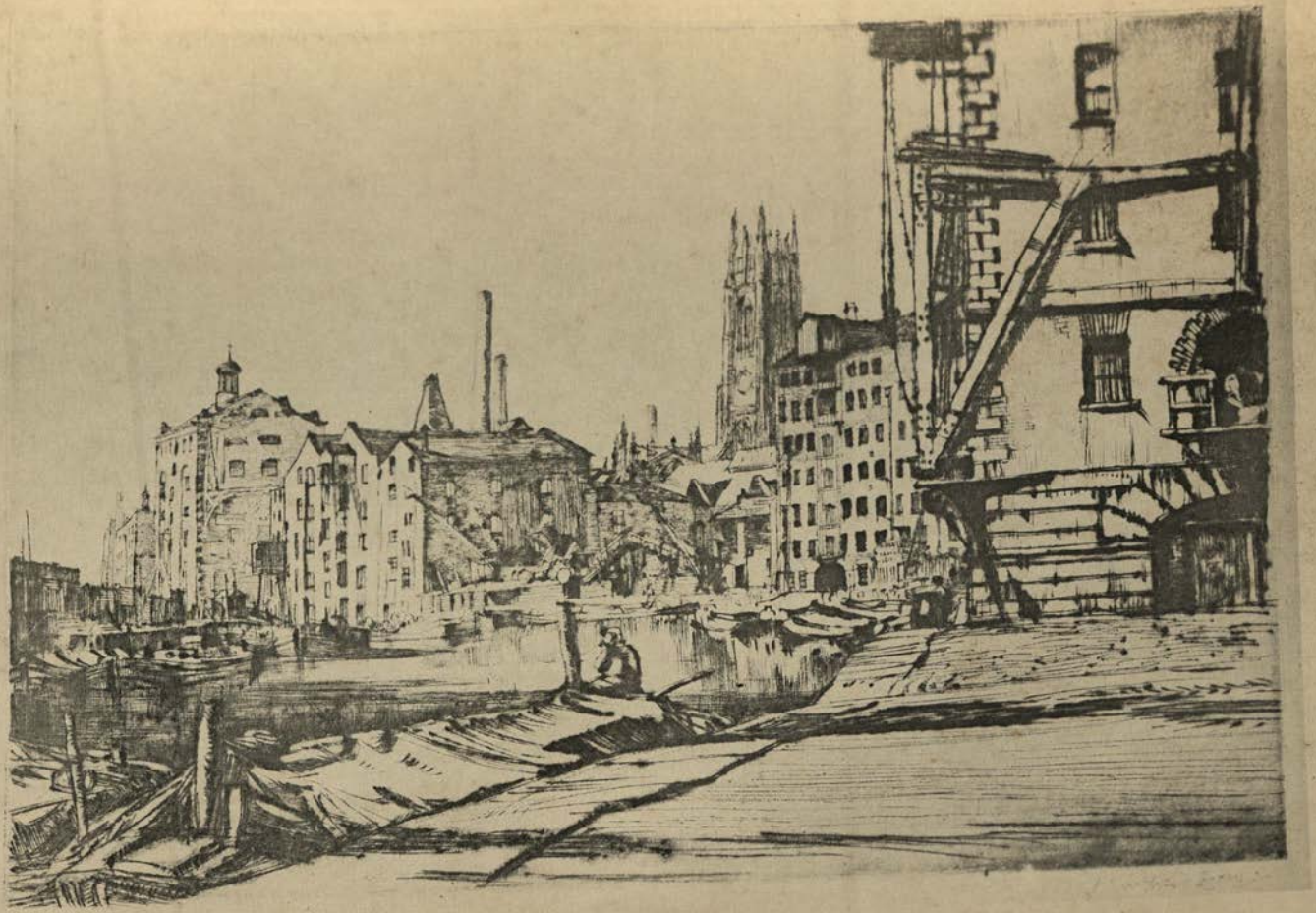
MUIRHEAD BONE

BORN about ten years after Cameron—therefore presumably with ten years less of work behind him—Muirhead Bone is the most juvenile of those English—or must we say British—etchers of the younger School who are at all "in the first flight" of our original engravers. But, like a good Scotsman, Bone matured early—or developed early, to say the least—and the volume of his labour is already abundant, and if he never laid another stroke with the etching-needle he might yet be sure of his place. Mr. Campbell Dodgson has scrupulously catalogued something like Two Hundred and Twenty of his prints, and thus far he has catalogued nothing wrought later than the end of 1907, and since the end of 1907 Bone must have added another twenty or five-and-twenty Dry-points to the long series whose themes and states Mr. Dodgson has learnedly registered.

It may reasonably be doubted whether, in the years to come, Muirhead Bone, by fresh endeavours, will advance yet further in the estimation of the competent, for it is perfectly possible that the cycle of his individual art is well-nigh completed. Can Dry-point—the Dry-point of the self-same craftsman, interpreting the vision of the self-same artist—go much further, or go very differently? I am not professing to prophesy; though, under the circumstances, I should have more hopes of Bone's general

progress from the abandonment or subordination of the process of Dry-point than from its continuance. The pure etched line, and a dexterity in "biting," might conceivably much better open to him the means of expressing to us his newer experience. But, be that as it may—and be the Future of his labours a new triumph, or, like some of his quite recent pieces, at most a *succès d'estime*—it is certain that the best of the work achieved, notwithstanding its limitations in kind, will have to be reckoned with as long as the Art lasts and the interest in it. The etcher of "The Shot Tower," of "The Haystack," of "Clare Market," of "Ayr Prison," of "Leeds Warehouses," of "South Coast," has produced not only many a clever plate—which is the superfluous—but a few, perhaps more than a few, masterpieces—which is the essential. The production of clever things, and capable, may lie in any Art, within the compass of the creature of another; within the range of the follower, intelligent, assiduous; but to produce masterpieces—any masterpiece—a man must be himself. An obvious truth, yet one which, for all that, will bear repeating often, because it is the truth which it is the first business of the amateur to remember and the first pleasure of the Collector to act upon.

In Muirhead Bone's easily visible yet not aggressively assertive individuality in Art lies then the main source of his strength and charm. That was apparent, in a measure, almost from the beginning. More than one of his Glasgow etchings, done before he had known London, gave evidence that here was no mere imitative student of the great dead masters, or of masters like Whistler and Haden—both at that time numbered with the living. To the city scene of his own land and period—and to the squalid working quarter, and to the movement of the everyday crowd—he could give interest. Or, rather, he



LEEDS' WAREHOUSES

MUIRHEAD BONE

saw the interest there already—saw it, and used it and preserved it in his work.

Still, Bone's Glasgow time was on the whole the time of pupillage and education. Not fully, and still more, not regularly, was he the master of his means until he journeyed to the South and beheld London. London fascinated him. His joy and interest in the scenes that it presented stimulated the faculties of vision and execution. The pupil, I believe, of an architect, two things might have been expected of Bone, of which only one was ever really apparent. He was almost certain to approach draughtsmanship from the side of the exact and precise chronicler—the recorder respecting the facts. He did so approach it; but well-nigh from the first, he could narrate fact with freedom. The second expectation it would have been reasonable to form of him was, that with his training, the building of stateliness, the building of importance, the building of a Past, with dignified and known history, would have been the one he would have been most ready to admire, most eager to portray. That was not so at all. From the first it was humble London, London in undress or London with no "wedding garment," that moved his thought and his hand. He understood at once the aspect of the commonplace street —I think, moreover, he saw in the street we are accustomed to *think* commonplace just that in it which was peculiar and personal: its little touch of dignity or interesting homeliness; its scanty saving grace. The first plate to which he addressed himself in London was that of "Belgrave Hospital, Kennington." It is characteristic that it should be "a brick building approaching completion, but still surrounded by scaffolding" (I quote from Mr. Campbell Dodgson). That was wrought in 1902. And one of his first pencil drawings—for me it is a finger-

post or milestone in his history—was "Vauxhall Lodgings"—the long and gentle curve of that Cubitt-built (as I suppose) and slightly Classic row of houses at the Victoria Street end of the Vauxhall Bridge Road—on the Pimlico, not on the Westminster, side of it. Really there is a certain dignity, a certain suggestion of elegance, in their uniform restraint. There belongs to them a gentle air of breeding. Blue blood is mixed with other in their veins. They are the bastard offspring of a great Style. Muirhead Bone saw it.

But generally the London that Muirhead Bone has cared for—and into whose intimacy he has, so to say, quietly edged himself—is a London that is without even the not widely recognized claims of that curved terrace of the Vauxhall Bridge Road: it is the London of the half-destroyed Clare Market, or of a Soho street long fallen from its earlier fortunes. In it, with the interest of curiosity, Mr. Bone finds, of course, the interest of pure line, of contour, and of character, of atmosphere, and moral atmosphere—of the town's, the very quarter's, *état d'âme*, so to say—and the interest of light and shade. Thus have come to be produced plates now engaging for the display of one quality and now for the display of another. The plate may be dramatic, may have vividness and at the same time mystery, an imaginative hint—"St. John's Wood" with the cutting of the Great Central Railway, with the illuminated house, the waving poplar, and the background of dark, unpierceable sky. Or it may be calmer and more simply pictorial, but with an exquisite technique, and that is the attraction of "The Shot Tower," which is so much more than the tower—the life of the river-side. Or it may be imaginative again, in its own way, but making no sign of drama. "Clare Market" is like that: the little row of houses, exposed to

somewhat distant view by recent demolitions, and the stretch of the *terrain vague*—you feel, as Dickens said of the Parisian houses, that each house encloses its own secret, and you go on to reflect, as Dickens did, that every heart in every house "is, in some of its imaginings, a secret to the heart nearest it." From these successes you may pass to an occasional failure, or half-failure, such as the ambitious plate of a great national monument and institution—I mean the "Somerset House" plate—skilful enough in detail, and the noble building not bereft of all its dignity, but badly placed upon the copper—a composition *manquée*, a clever man's just now and then forgivable, yet always vexatious, blundering.

Composition, indeed—although not actually seldom it is attained by him happily—is not the strong point, with Muirhead Bone. That is one of the things in which he is much more unequal than in any department of technical work, of mere craftsmanship. He is often not decisive: he hesitates. He is not certain of his aim or object: he is groping about. Take as an example the introduction, at a certain stage in the completing of the given number of impressions of the little "Strand" dry-point of a long oblong board, bearing some announcement upon it, quite cutting up the composition. It speedily was withdrawn. The graver fault of the "Somerset House"—the mistaken placing of the subject—was incurable. It is, too, this at least occasional uncertainty, in matters generally of detail—which yet affect immensely the ensemble, the general impression—that contributes to the inequality of by no means a few of Mr. Bone's engraved pieces: an inequality that is added to by the fact that beyond all question the plate has here and there deteriorated, or the issued impression been, for some reason, unhappy, before its author has begun to tinker

and amend—to introduce work which at worst, let us admit, is a useful stop-gap, and at best, a definite improvement. A "definite improvement," at best—it must be repeated—for I would impress upon the Collector that the inequality in Mr. Bone's impressions is not that of steady and continuous deterioration. There is a fall sometimes, and sometimes—though less often—there is actually a gain. His case is but an extreme instance. I urge the point upon the newer Collector, often choked with wealth, not always crowded with intelligence—it is an extreme instance of the folly of pinning one's faith upon the excellence of the mere early "State." With Muirhead Bone, oftener perhaps than with most men, the later "State" is, in some respects, better than the earlier.

Is any particular order of subject better than another? Yes: certainly as a whole it is the town pieces that must have the preference. But along with half a dozen, perhaps even a dozen, London pieces, of surpassing goodness, and along with "Ayr Prison," there are many pieces done or conceived outside the capital which have merit. Now and then it will be found even that the word "merit" falls short of doing them justice; for even the least interesting and least skilled of them would have sufficed to make for their author a reputation of the second or third class, and the best of them—the very best of them, though they are few—are worthy altogether of association with "Shot Tower," "Clare Market," "St. John's Wood," and that quaint, perfect plate which records the aspect of the land just east of Regent Street—it bears the taking "literary" title "Liberty's Clock"; but that this not insignificant yet not very notable object was the motive of the design no one could suspect for a moment. No, no; the motive was—I hope—the

scaffolding and building operations of the house in the right foreground, and the perspective, in clear and pleasant illumination, of a street typical of that quarter.

Bone's best pieces out of London, then, include a few which are of the outskirts of a large town, or a small one, or are of pure country. Of the former, "Hampstead Heath"—really a path, a wall, and a row of ancient trees upon the road to "The Spaniards"—and the "Ayr Prison," with the menacing grimness of its building and the Wouverman-like figure group and Wouverman-like atmosphere of its landscape, are the happiest instances of those it has been my business to appraise. And, of the latter, the "Fosse, Lincoln": it is well outside Lincoln, of course, and its suggestion is of the sunniness and quiet of the canal-traced lowland—but the impressions of this plate are very various, the good are very rare, and it is absolutely essential to see a rich one. Then, again, "East Blatchington," a village in Sussex—with its hint of the chalk land, in its heights and hollows—

Where little lost Down churches praise the Lord Who made the hills.

It is a pleasant piece—but No, I cannot place it with those London things which are at "the top of the basket."

But more masterly, as a rule, than the pure country pieces, and in two or three instances perfectly unexceptionable, filled full with distinction and charm, are the plates in which there is a hint, and sometimes more than a hint, of the near presence of the sea. "Rye from Camber" is one; "Near Chichester" is another, that has less unity; and the finest of all, perhaps, is "The South Coast"—really, I am informed, no one spot as it actually exists to win our love, but a composition based on fact, a free adaptation and *précis*, so to say—a perfect abstract and brief chronicle of all the charm of all the Sussex

lowland shore. If there is one thing in the world that Muirhead Bone draws even better than houses and their scaffolding, it is the delicate curve of the small boat.

Before parting from Bone, let it be said that he is distinguished above all contemporary etchers that I know—unless indeed exception must be made in favour of the veteran Lepère—for the vitality and meaning that his quick, certain observation and alert point allow him, and as it seems so easily, to bestow upon his groups of figures. They are small things, nearly always: they are always secondary. Never has Bone given the group or crowd the quite obvious importance of the surging mass that clamours indignantly about the base of Amiens, in the distinguished Frenchman's "L'Inventaire." But Bone uses figures much as they were used by the masters of Dutch "little landscape" in their great Seventeenth Century—by men, that is, other than Ruysdael, other than Rembrandt and De Koninck: giants for whom in presence of Nature romantic, or at the least wide-stretching, Nature itself—the Nature of the land and sky—was enough, and the human figure a superfluity or an intrusion. But the human figure is not superfluity nor intrusion with Wouverman and Isaac Ostade; nor, is our day, with Muirhead Bone.

CHAPTER XXIV

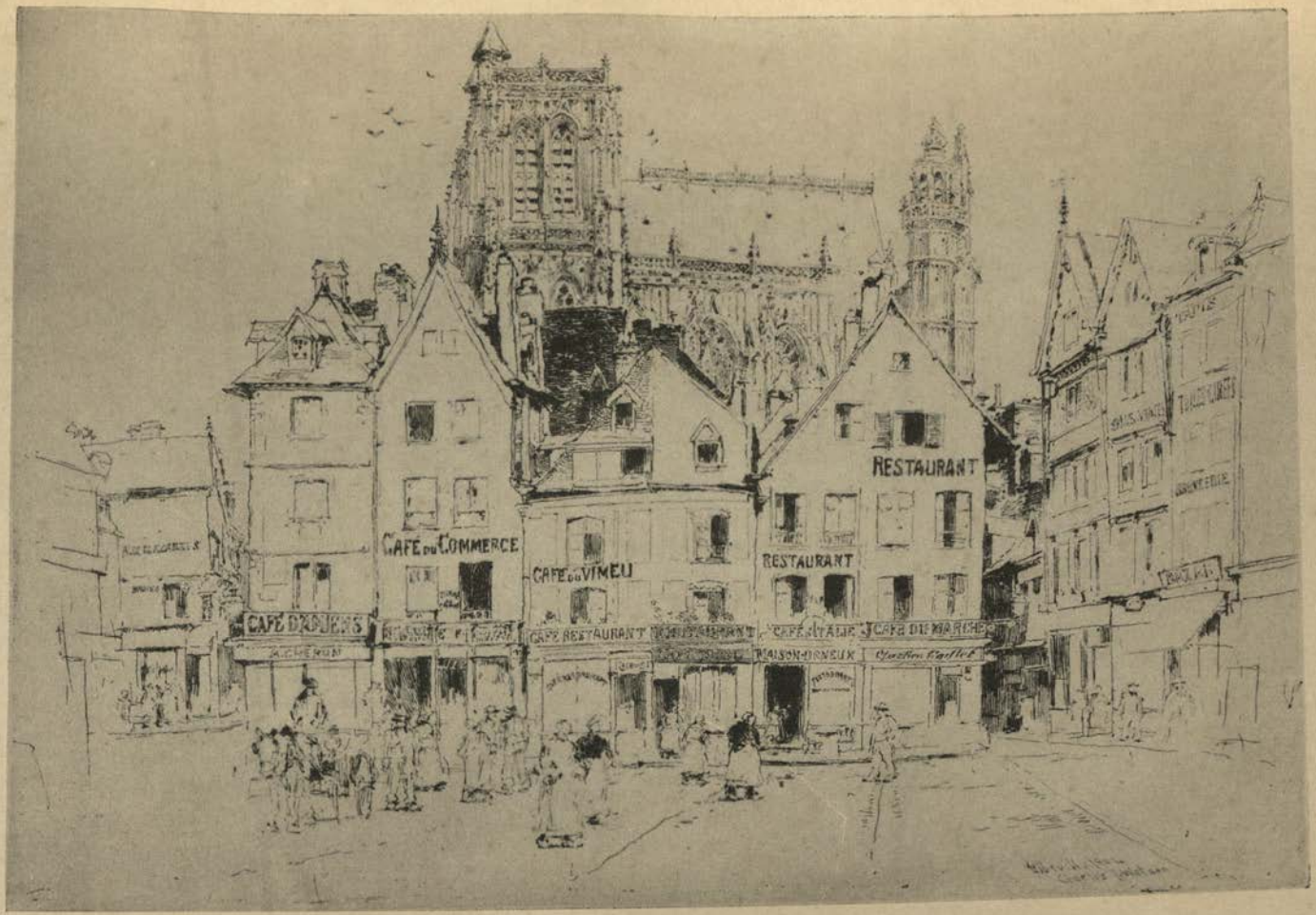
MANY GOOD ENGLISH ETCHERS

A CERTAIN limitation of sympathy—even of method—has stood in the way of the adequate recognition of C. J. Watson by those who are not mere admirers of the pretty. Yet among the English practitioners of Etching, lacking by no means in years, few men have as much individuality in daintiness; nor, on a conscientious survey of his work, can daintiness of touch and prettiness of detail be held to be his only, though they may be held, perhaps, to be his most conspicuous qualities. In some quite early work, and in some of what may now be called almost his "middle time," Watson gives sudden evidence of a decision, of a largeness of view, with which it is not, so far as I am aware, the custom to credit him. The existence of these things must be noted: to them is due the admirable simplicity of his little wooden bridge—an early vision of East Anglia—a thing seen, felt, stated very directly—and of a later subject, so entirely removed from that one: the Perugia church, with its stately approach by steps empty and vast.

Still, these qualities, of decision and largeness—largeness which, in Art, is almost the same thing as unity—these qualities, although discovered sometimes in his plates, are not characteristic of Watson: their appearance is the exception: it is not the rule. The rule—the thing we look for in the productions of this etcher, seductive

and agreeable, and, withal, within his own lines, sterling —is the presentation, picturesque and indicative, though now and then a little flimsy of substance, of the charm of Gothic ornament and of the texture of soft grey, time-worn stone. In Renaissance work, that he has studied chiefly in Italy, the charm is massiveness, and, yet more, it is faultless proportion; because Renaissance, after all, is only a late offspring of the Classic; and on faultless proportion—always the true beginning—rests the high virtue of Classic Design. To a certain degree only does Mr. Watson compass, or be in any way concerned with, its presentation. More habitually is he fascinated—more habitually does he succeed in fascinating us—by visions of lace-like tracery, and the uplifted ornament of the late Gothic façades. For these, it is Northern France, generally, that has given him the motive: Rue, St. Riquier, St. Loo, Abbeville, the Gothic portions of St. Jacques at Dieppe, and, as I seem to remember—though I have not seen the plate lately—the lofty choir of that second church at Dieppe: the church that, between the main street and the Casino, lifts itself solitarily, in a most tranquil *Place*. The plate that is the subject of reproduction in this volume—a side of the Grande Place at Abbeville, with a *tourelle* of St. Wulfran rising above its humble roofs, shows likewise Mr. Watson's eye for quaintness, picturesque accident—what is called "local colour."

We will not separate this sensitive draughtsman from his wife—a gifted person—who was Miss Minna Bolingbroke. She deserves notice. As Mrs. Watson, she has out-Watsoned Watson in one or two cases, in the delicacy of her depicting, on a very small scale, of pretty Gothic ornament. And perhaps to out-Watson Watson is even more a feminine characteristic than an artistic virtue. As Miss Minna Bolingbroke, did not this lady



CAFÉS AT ABBEVILLE

C. J. WATSON

execute certain rich and decisive little dry-points, of birds in the field, which should have won her the appreciation of the veteran Bracquemond—past-master in that theme? They are admirable.

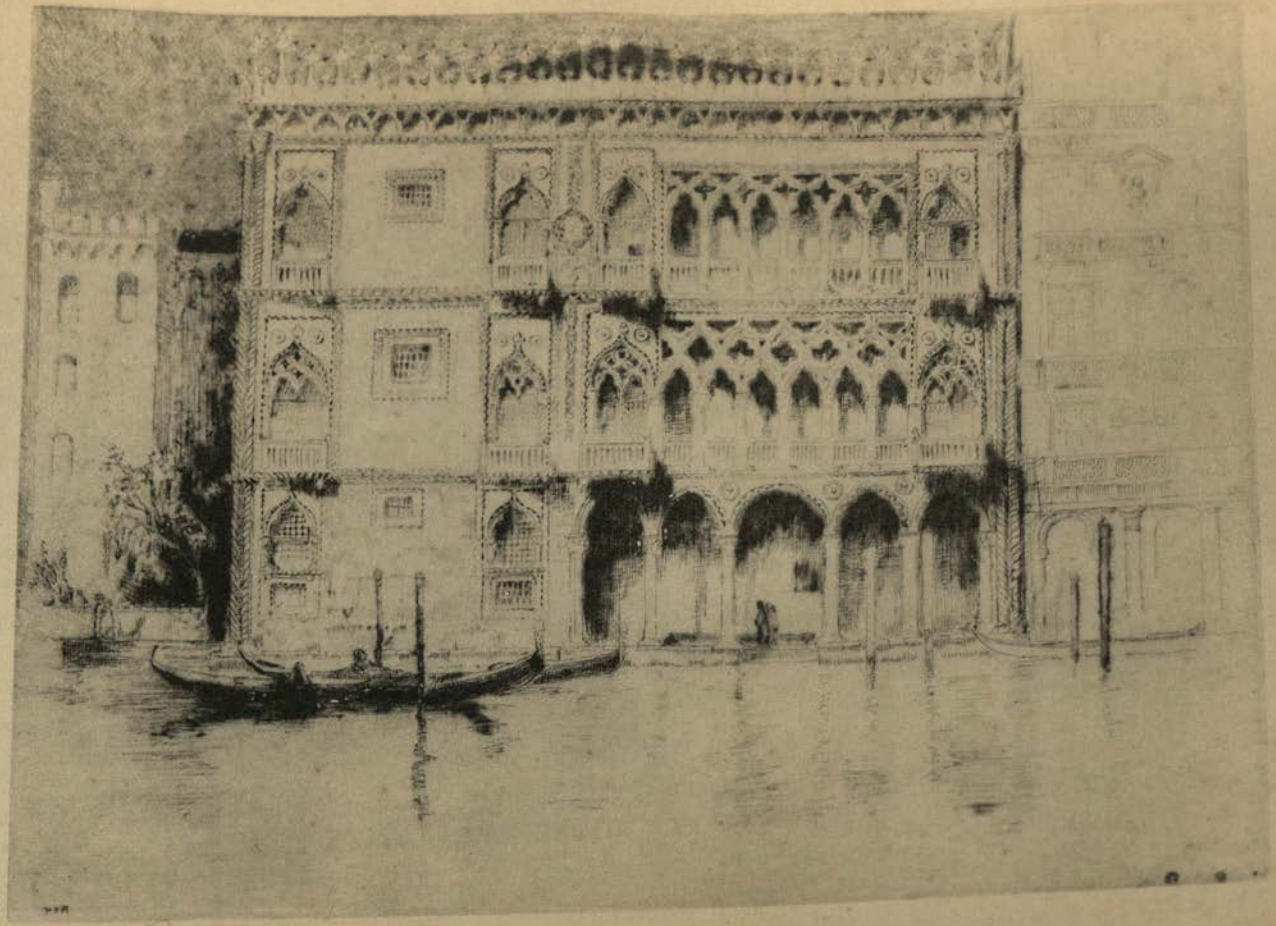
Mr. Oliver Hall, whose painting may be delicate, but is not masculine—it is certainly reticent—and whose few lithographs (those at least that I know) are charming and quite learned instances of the exercise of landscape draughtsmanship upon the lithographic stone, has done a certain number of seemingly very spontaneous etchings, of open country passed over by wind, of wind tearing through agitated tree boughs, and has done these in a spirit and a method of which, it may be, Seymour Haden was the only begetter. More, perhaps, may have been expected from Mr. Hall's earlier and very happy essays with the etching-needle than has up to the present been vouchsafed; but the best pieces—in the true, vivid sketcher's vein—have a right to be remembered, whether or not they be followed by others, their equals, their inferiors, or their betters.

A little akin to them, with some wholesome inspiration, too, it cannot but be thought, from Seymour Haden —at least occasionally—are plates that have been seen from the needle of Mr. Luke Taylor, whose "Pastoral," which I saw, about two years ago, at the Fine Art Society's, in an Exhibition organized by Mr. Dawbarn, is like a Charles Jacque, rather than like anything by the first President of our Royal Society of Painter Etchers. Mr. Luke Taylor's "Wheelwright" is an agreeable, creditable little plate, which has a right to be pretty; but it is hardly characteristic, and to the piece "Black Poplars," rough and strong, I assign a higher rank. "Black Poplars" has staying

power. It is a print of great virility, and of compelling charm.

For years now Mr. E. W. Charlton has been showing, at the Painter Etchers, modest little pieces, which, without reaching, or even foretelling the attainment of, absolute mastery, are fresh and pleasing, and fresh and pleasing, moreover, upon lines which it might be thought that Whistler and Frank Short between them had pretty well exhausted. Delicately bitten studies of the wharves of our smaller, older harbours—of little seaboard towns full of quaint form and interesting quiet, and sense of air and space and leisure, broken by just occasional bustle—occupy Mr. Charlton generally. Rhythm of intricate line is a matter that he is quite alive to. "With Grain from Frisco" would be desirable for its sky. "At the Tide Gates" is excellent—except the sky. And good without qualification, it appears, is "The Arun at Littlehampton."

An Etcher of capacity, beyond all question, is Mr. E. W. Synge. It is true that we might find him more interesting, if we could find him more personal. He imitates no one very visibly; yet, somehow, he cannot always, or even often, persuade us that he is quite himself. Architecture, and architecture with a landscape background, he has etched well in many places. He may yet make a stride forward and surprise us. Meanwhile, in my opinion, the best of Mr. Synge's work, the strongest, that which has the most of individuality, remains the portfolio published by Messrs. Connell, now several years ago—the Spanish Set—in whose prints we see, in violent and fine perspective, gaunt bridges, austere towers, and Toledo lifting itself in its rough solitude—"a cry in the desert."



CA D'ORO

AFFLRCK

Affleck, whose small Venetian Set the Messrs. Connell are but just now publishing—the "Ca d' Oro" of our illustration is taken from that group—is, in making Venice his theme, facing a greater difficulty than any which Mr. Synge has continuously coped with; or so one would surmise, for who can represent Venice, aspects of Venice, anew and satisfactorily? That is what one would think, but one may be out in one's reckoning; for, while Toledo, like many another city, may be known and celebrated of one lover, Time, and all her history, and the careers, performances, of those who have known her so well, give reason to us when we liken Venice to some mobile, subtle personality, accessible, revelling in change. Venice is a *grande amoureuse*—all things to all men—as Guardi, Canale, Holland and Turner, Boudin and Ziem, Whistler, Cameron, Le Sidaner, come together to testify. Still, in the etcher's art, it is already something that Affleck, winning the favours of Venice, should win them differently from Whistler and Cameron, and should find new favours bestowed. He approached her with learning. Again his large plate of "Edinboro' Castle," his still considerable "Rose Window of Notre Dame," with the river-boat, big in the foreground—a well-chosen *repoussoir*—bear witness to his skill and his audacity, his freshness of attack.

Sir Charles Robinson, the picture expert of an elder generation—a man of fourscore years—might be judged by a different standard; in part by reason of the generation he belongs to; in part because his practice has been so small that he must be classed with the amateur. Still, in appraising a man's work, it is result—not opportunity—that must be considered; and, had Sir Charles Robinson's works the amateur's feebleness, the amateur's absence of

individuality, there would have been found here no place for mention of them. As it is, I am glad to acknowledge they have a certain message of their own. They are visions —not wanting in subtlety, not wanting in poetry—of the effects of atmosphere over wide landscape. Sometimes they represent moist, tepid sunshine; never, I think, the violent storm cloud; never, certainly, the sharp, decisive light: "l'éclat du soleil qui frappe," as Corot said of it.

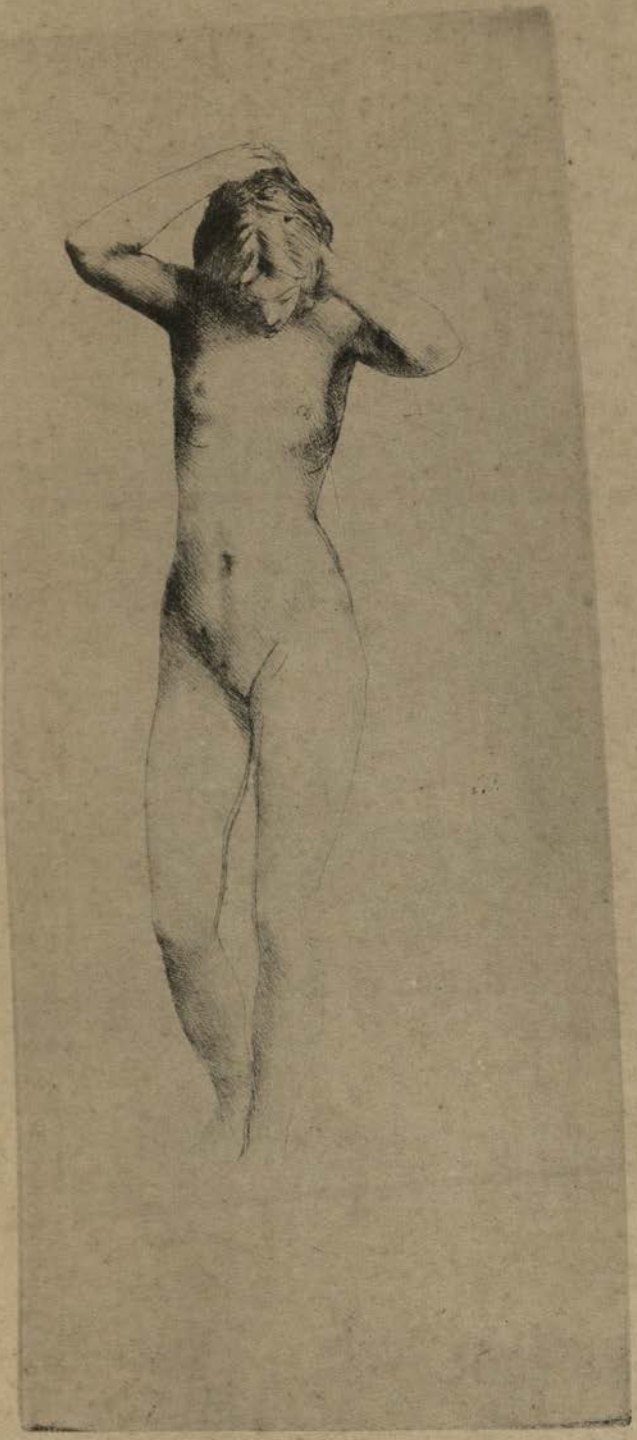
To the older generation belongs also Colonel Robert Goff—though he is fifteen years or so younger than Robinson. Goff has led two lives—as Haden did. As a boy, he embarked with the Coldstream Guards at Gravesend, for the Crimea. In time he left the Army; took up Art as an amateur—stuck to it, thereafter, with the assiduity of a nature energetic and cordial, craving for expression. So it is that Goff has come to be delivered, in the course of many years, of many etchings, of most various themes —tree forms and Hampshire trout streams, busy little towns in England and in Italy, and bustling or sleepy harbours. Oftener than not it is the impression of the moment that Goff gives you with impulse—his plates sometimes rather over-bitten, or perchance too heavily printed. There is unfailing spirit in them. Goff reaches, it may be, his highest note in certain studies of the Sussex shore. The delicate accuracy and delicate grace of his "Old Chain Pier, Brighton," is not quickly surpassed. His composition—habitually good, so easy, yet so learned—is particularly admirable in "Norfolk Bridge, Shoreham"; and Storm van's Gravesande can have no better wave-drawing than Goff's in "The South Cone" —a title sometimes amusingly misprinted in catalogues as "The South Cove." There is no "cove" about

it, whatever: only the unbroken sweep of Sussex coast, and the perturbed waters the sou'-wester has roused.

Sickert's plates are very few in comparison with those of the author of that formidable, generally acceptable *œuvre* on which I have just been dwelling. But Walter Sickert, whatever he does, is too incisive to be insignificant, and his pieces count. I gather from him that he has been dreadfully careless with his plates, as a rule. Some exist, some are lost, some mislaid, some damaged. And not only are the coppers few and difficult to find—that is the case, also, too often with the impressions. Sickert himself, I believe, has no important collection. Mr. Francis James confesses to the possession of a certain number of the prints—but they are in remote Devon—and Mrs. George Swinton was kind enough to show me not a few, cared for and carefully distributed over the various rooms of her house, on the north side of the Park. Of two or three plates that he placed his hand upon, Sickert has printed, within the last few years, a limited number of impressions, and the coppers are now destroyed. One represented the Hôtel Royal at Dieppe—the large and solid, simple edifice of five-and-twenty years ago—another, the interior of the Bedford Music Hall, at Camden Town; another, an *aquatint* of extreme cleverness, the interior of "The Middlesex," in Drury Lane. When I saw my friend last, he broached the theory—and apparently held to it—that the ideal etching should not require the support of any devices of printing; that it should not need to be printed by the etcher himself; that any trade printer of decent intelligence should be able to cope with it. No doubt excellent etchings can be wrought that will submit to these conditions; but to exact that Etchings should submit to them appears to me to be not

only heterodox, but, in essentials, unreasonable. That opinion of mine I hold without impugning the piquancy and charm of Sickert's own work. He is a personality. He is a power. It is impossible to him to be dull.

A score of years ago, Charles Holroyd helped Legros, in the Etching Class at the Slade School. It was as a pupil in that school, originally, that Holroyd began to etch. Unlike Mr. Strang, he had not quite enough of Legros's personal manner for it to become with him a mannerism. But he absorbed—since his own nature led him to it—Legros's immense, instinctive care for dignity, and, more directly than Legros himself, he has leant to the Classic. A very early plate—"Borghese Gardens," with the stone pines, and, by some placid water, a very slender nude—done, I think, when Holroyd enjoyed the advantage of the travelling Studentship, was the first intimation of this bent. The Monte Oliveto Series was not a wide departure from it. A rather later "Farm behind Scarborough," interesting and reticent, was nearer to everyday Nature, and nearer, again, much more recently, comes "The Medway Series." In Holroyd's subjects from Sacred History, Rembrandt and the Italians, and again Legros, have at different times, and sometimes altogether, been influential with him. But merely imitative he has never been. By this time he has wrought in all about Two Hundred and Fifty plates, marked always by worthy aim, though of great inequality in composition, in draughtsmanship of the figure, and even in purely technical achievement—the command at the given hour, of the resources of the craft of the Etcher. His partial failures have arisen sometimes, as I surmise, from an ambition that "o'erleaps itself"; but on the other hand there are occasions on which his ambition has proved



THE BATHER

HOLROYD

amply justified. Most of all is this justification conspicuous in his dealings with the Nude; not as accessory or incident, but as the avowed and all-absorbing theme. These plates are of his most recent years, of his full middle age. Sometimes they are large plates, or, at all events, largeish plates, like "The Triton," with the almost Rubens-like forms of female creatures of the sea, in act to emulate the gyrations of the modern "contortionist"—skilled acrobats of the ocean—or, like "Nymphs by the Sea," wherein two suavely proportioned damsels, with something of Venetian feeling, rest, with their ample contours outstretched, in the foreground, and gaze over calm waters to a remote horizon. Oftener they are small plates; the finest Nude of all being the firm and elegant young figure of "The Bather": hands lifted to her hair—a dry-point highly wrought, of searching draughtsmanship; austere and abstract as a bronze; a small, complete creation of Classical Antiquity, to which it happens that To-day has given birth.

CHAPTER XXV

BURRIDGE, SPENCE, AND OTHERS

WITH Mr. Frederick Burridge—who holds an Art appointment at Liverpool—we are back again in always English landscape, and in a world of changing weather. He has a windmill scene that is quite rightly striking: something entirely beyond the obviously picturesque—and it is into the service of the obviously picturesque that a windmill, with the sunset sky behind it, is now generally pressed. He has a plate, "Traeth Bach," interesting for its distance, luminous and delicate. In "Whisht Weather" Mr. Burridge shows the big bend of a river; heavy rain falling on dark trees and dark boats, one side of the landscape clear almost to serenity. "Harlech" verges on the sensational—perhaps only because the place itself seems to be the creation of an impressive scene-painter—or so I remember it, during a weary week of exile in Wales. We are back with the homely in "The Little Smithy." It is simple and concentrated—a study of illumination worthy of the masters of Dutch Seventeenth-Century Genre. But more typical of the Etcher now under discussion, and in actual performance just as highly commendable, are two landscape and sky studies—"Thunder Weather" and "The March of Waters." They are the aspect of the moment, clearly and delicately apprehended, finely and firmly rendered. In the first, over a still illuminated river in mid-distance, there is the ominous roll of brooding, lowering skies.

THE MARCH OF WATERS

BURRIDGE

In the second, we have a receding coast-line, on which is thrown a long cloud-shadow—the sky to the right now luminous again: hopeful: radiant almost—the storm has left it. With light and steady touch—with nothing superfluous permitted, and nothing essential withheld—the hand of Mr. Burridge registers, like a dial, these changing hours.

An etching that, in a moment of expansion, I bought at the Royal Painter Etchers—it notes skilfully the recession of a great tract of low-lying land—is far from being the only piece to remind one with what freshness and visible enjoyment Miss Margaret Kemp-Welch chronicles the aspects of a country which I fear would appear to the average North-countryman as having "no scenery": "scenery," to that intelligence, uneducated in Art, consisting too often only of what is conventionally accounted "romantic"—dales, defiles, and overhanging woodlands. The services done to Etching by Messrs. Slocombe, Mr. May, and Mr. Percy Thomas, in days before it had general acceptance, merit some remembrance—by Mr. E. Slocombe, in particular, there is a study of a "fine figure of a woman," Joe Gargery would have called it; his reference, in that connection, being invariably to his wife—it is a noble female figure, bent with poignant sorrow, for which no consolation can discover itself.

I should study Mr. John with greater interest had he been praised with a less wild extravagance. He has done nice things, and ugly ones. "Fruit Sellers" and "The Little Family" are among the former. Mr. Menpes's Japanese etchings, seen many years ago, were ingeniously contrived records of his impressions of Oriental travel. The flexibility of his talent, his observation, and his assiduity in the pursuit of methods have enabled him recently to be the author of a striking, life-like vision of Pall Mall. Mr.

Nathaniel Sparks has done good work in London. By Mr. W. Monk—whose vision of some cathedral city I have known to be unduly florid—there is a "Millbank" one may like, and a desirable print of the Quadrant with old St. James's Hall in the happiest moment of its demolition. Mr. Martin Hardie—a young bureaucrat of South Kensington, and an instructive writer on the Arts—has been delivered already of several skilful transcripts, touched perhaps with imagination, of English coast and country scenes of which he has discerned the freshness and the true appeal. Mr. Mulready Stone is proving himself an executant of curious daintiness and admirable simplicity—concerned often and well with showing us the pretty pattern of light and shade and line which may give interest—lasting interest—to the shops and windows of a quaint court or alley out of the Strand, or to a little lost, old-world fragment like Shepherds' Market, in the heart of Mayfair. He could not have produced "Mount Pleasant, Clerkenwell" and "Crawford Passage" unless he had loved London, and London's by-ways, and had understood them.

But it is with a more detailed, a more explanatory mention of an *œuvre* already important, already far advanced, and (what an extremely rare thing in Etching!) an *œuvre* devoted to Historic Genre, that it is well to close this chapter. And in speaking of Mr. Robert Spence I shall speak almost exclusively of the great Series of Etchings—a series yet, very probably, to be extended, though it now numbers Thirty-five pieces—in which he sets himself to realize and register the extraordinary personality of George Fox. At the Royal Painter Etchers, only a year or so ago, a print that had for its subject "Mr. Pepys at Gravesend" showed an

inclination on the part of its author to address himself to a new order of theme. He may seek variety with advantage; and, as he has humour unquestionably, Mr. Spence is amongst the few artists who may approach the diarist of the Town without fear—with good results. Yet it is much to be doubted whether his faculties, as a whole, are as excellently exercised in illustrating Pepys as in illustrating and celebrating the first of the Quakers; and it is certain, entirely, that George Fox—his inspiration and quaintness—will never again find amongst etchers—amongst pictorial draughtsmen, whatever be their medium—any such interpreter as Robert Spence.

Here is a collection—a stated Set it has not yet become—of Etchings which involve something of Landscape (Landscape now homely, as in the plate of a searcher of men's hearts now perched upon the haystack; now weird, as in the piece devoted to Fox's half-inspired reproof of witchcraft), and a most comprehensive power of dealing with interiors, humble as that of the Etching in which is represented how Fox "came among a people that relied much upon dreams," or it may be, of middle-class comfort, like that of the bedroom of the sick woman whose "husband's name was Baldock," or, next perhaps, of the Court of Justice, panelled, tapestry-hung, with a Judge, amiable but mistaken, in the judgment-seat at one end, and George Fox at the other, "grieved to see so much Lightness in a Court where such Solemn Matters are handled."

It has been impossible even to give a hint of the variety of these interiors without anticipating, as it were, the main matter—that is, the artist's sympathetic, understanding entrance into the character of the seer and his times. A "seer," undoubtedly—for Fox, if any one, was a *grand initié*, as deeply penetrating as he was

humorous and ready; and that Mr. Spence has conveyed. Over and above the gravity of its intention, the plate of that Court scene would stand beside "The Laughing Audience" of Hogarth as a study, yet more comprehensive, varied, and elaborate than that one, of the divers ways in which Human Nature feels, and human character expresses, the sense of the funny. Why, from that point of view alone, the plate is a theme for an essay.

Then, from the *Journal* of George Fox, "at Plymouth, 1655," there is a meeting scene, where "one Elizabeth Trelawney" comes close to the expounder—"being thick of hearing"—and Fox preaches on, to a rapt audience: old men and a little child alike stilled. To name one other subject, there is the piece, full also, as one supposes, of Seventeenth-Century character—full certainly of dramatic effect, and striking for its large arrangement of chiaroscuro—the piece in which the Quaker, brought up, in Charles the Second's earliest days, it must be, before magistrates, at Holker Hall, is called by them a "rebel" and a "traitor," and, striking his hand upon the table, and visibly moved, thinks fit to remind them that his sufferings were more than theirs; "for I had been cast into Derby dungeon for six months together, and had suffered much because I would not take up arms against the King, before Worcester-fight: and I had nothing but love and good-will to the King." A moment's silence, doubtless, and a glance of the compelling eye, and then: "Ye talk of the King, a company of you. But where were ye in Oliver's days, and what did ye do for him then?"

Spence is a fully trained artist, who worked at the "Slade" some fifteen years ago; then, for a long time, at Cormon's Parisian atelier; and he is an Associate of the

The Judge said, You say well in that: but did you deny to take the Oath? What say you? What would'st thou have me to say, said I? for I have told thee before, what I did say then he asked me, If I would have these Men to swear that I had taken the Oath? I asked him, If he would have those Men to swear that I had refused the Oath? At which the Court burst out into Laughter. I was grieved, to see so much Lightness in a Court, where such Solemn Matters are handled, and thereupon asked them, If this Court was a Play house? Where is Gravity and Sobriety, said I? for this Behaviour does not become you.

Lancaster Assizes 1664. George Fox his Journal.

GEORGE FOX AND THE JUDGE

SPENCE

Société Nationale. For ten years, or thereabouts, he has belonged to the Royal Painter Etchers. But he tells me he never "learnt" Etching, except out of a book. And he wishes he had; for sometimes now, with him, it is "a week of Etching, and two of hammering up and scraping." It is right in the end—or most of it—and there, in the result, this extra time, I know, so spent, is not lost labour. But the fact reminds us of Méryon—admitted master, now, of slow original engraving—and of his humble, half-pathetic declaration that his comrades, *did they but see what he saw*, would be far better etchers than he was —"for I have to mend my plate so often that I am a *tinker*, rather." Poor Méryon! But he *saw*. And Mr. Spence sees.

CHAPTER XXVI

BRANGWYN AND ALFRED EAST

AN interesting personality in Art is that of Frank Brangwyn; albeit his work is by no means of that stupendous importance which it assumes in the imagination of youthful devotees whose ignorance allows them no opportunity to appreciate any School but his own.

Brangwyn appeals—you see—at once to the superficial and the hasty, whose only chance of being appealed to at all is that they be appealed to rapidly. Judgment is not their "line." But Brangwyn is impressive at the very first moment, and to that prompt impressiveness these youthful men surrender. Brangwyn "collars" them: simply collars them—and they go his way.

He has so much in him besides the peculiarities that please the unequipped, that one wishes the most popular of his faults were minimized or banished. A different world than that one—"so much better disregarded," in Matthew Arnold's phrase—which spends its ecstasies upon him now, would come to his side then. But, even as it is, one must essay to do him justice—forgetting, first of all, what seems sometimes the unnecessary violence of method and the superfluous scale, both of which commend him to a public that does not ask to think, so much as to be struck.

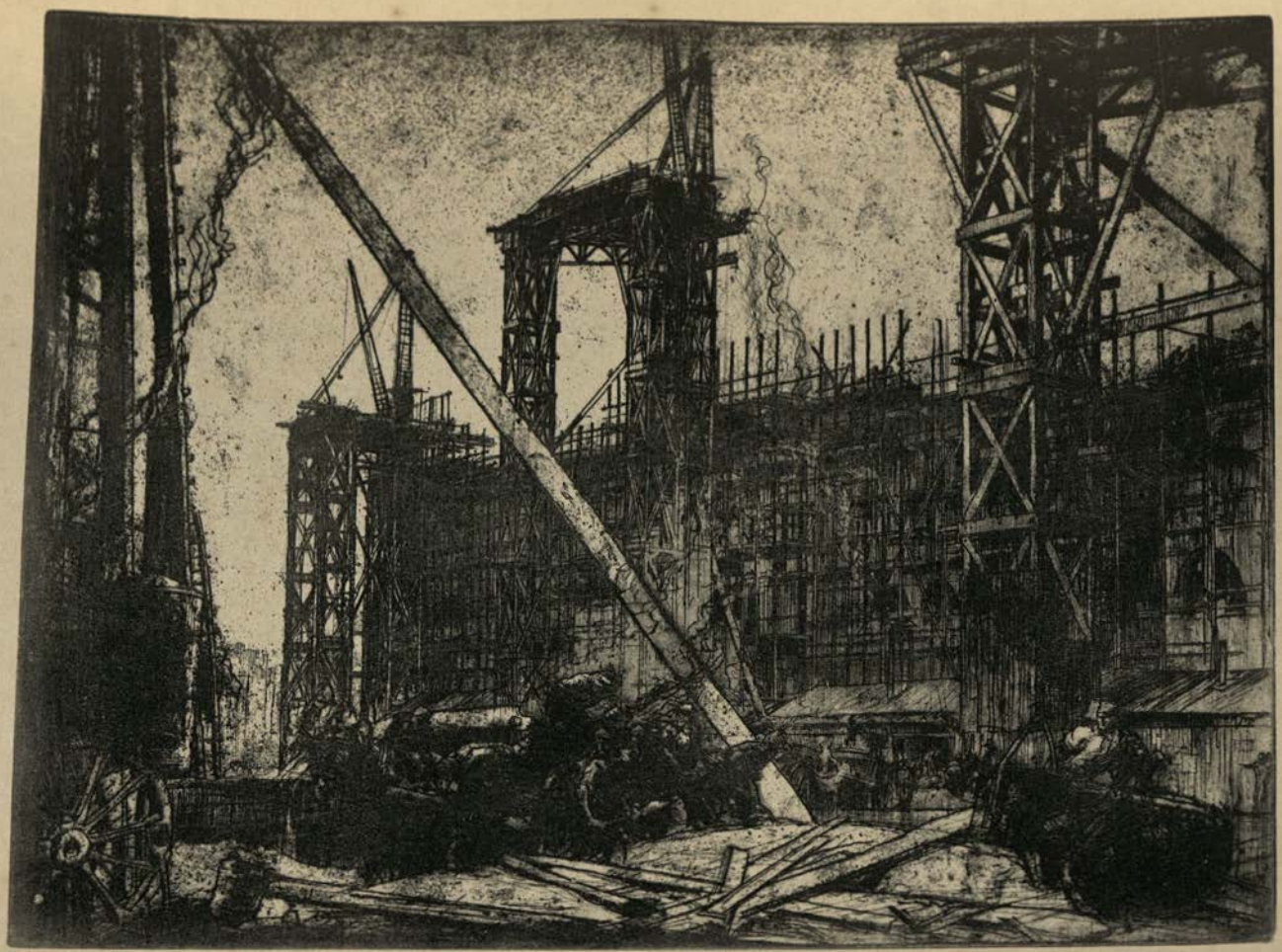
As regards Brangwyn's scale of Etching (his frequent, not his constant scale), even one who is not among the

most habitually foolish of his partisans urges its novelty as the sole reason why people whom he knows must be respected do very generally dislike it. They are surprised, he says, in effect, by this scale: the transition to it is novel. Accustomed to consider original prints (by such humble practitioners as Rembrandt, by the way), half a dozen of which can hang together on a panel, competent people find themselves disconcerted, face to face with a big Brangwyn, which is enough—this advocate considers—to "decorate" a wall. But the word "decorate" appears to beg the question. A very big Brangwyn covers a wall—or much of a wall—if you will; but to "cover" and to "decorate" are not synonymous terms, in any dictionary: and, for my own part, I cannot hold that great wall-space is often decorated by the exhibition upon it of the massive shadows and sometimes sensational lights of Mr. Brangwyn's simplified and manly design.

We must not be deterred, however, by the hysterics of his supporters, from appreciating with warmth the genuine skill with which this artist has brought into prominence, in Etching, artistic virtues far removed both from the imitation and the idealization of Nature. I mean, especially, the virtue of Design. It is a part—and a high part—of the modern movement, to set store by that virtue. Not indeed that the great masters of the Past have been unmindful of it. Had they been, those of us with any *flair* for beautiful achievement would know by instinct that they were not masters at all. But, in the Past—except in avowed Ornament, such as the inventions and combinations, dignified and lovely, of German "little masters," like Aldegrever and the Behams, or of refined French artists of the same Renaissance, Etienne Delaune and Jean Gourmant, for example—Design has never had the prominence that is assigned to it in the work of

Brangwyn: it has been an invisible handmaid, helpfully present, but absolutely unobtrusive and retiring, while the Masters have been recording their impressions, their emotions—while they have been chronicling their facts. Save in the case of such exceptions as I have indicated, Design has hardly been a motive. Now I think, not seldom, it has been a motive with Brangwyn, in his etchings, and in his paintings—as, surely, it has been a motive, within the same period, in the water-colours of Walter Bayes; in the inventions, weird sometimes, and sometimes full of tender grace, and always largely decorative, of Cayley Robinson; in the great drawings of H. M. Livens, in which massive bridges at Richmond and at Kew, gay restaurants of Piccadilly, sunlit hotels at Brighton, and squalid lodgings in Old Hastings, have served their purpose in Livens's arrangement of colour, line, and space. Yes, Brangwyn—whatever be the disadvantages of the scale he is too disposed to adopt—brings certainly into the art of Etching that very modern note of an enhanced attention to Design: of a keen delight in, and a not infrequent preoccupation with it.

In this matter, Sir Alfred East—whom I am sorry to speak of in this connection almost incidentally—has apparently followed the artist who is the immediate subject of discussion. In the particular medium of Etching, did Brangwyn, as I suppose, lead the way; and did East—promptly recognizing that it was possible to execute on copper or on zinc (for the largest, coarsest, most simplified plates are done on zinc generally) schemes comparable with those to which in oil paint he had already given characteristic expression—did East himself snatch at the medium Brangwyn had found serviceable? That may be conjectured. In any case, Sir Alfred has, within the last few years, transferred his labours, now and then, from



BUILDING THE VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM

BRANGWYN

pictures to the metal plate, working thereon, in Cotswold and in other subjects, pieces in high accord with the aim of so many of his recent canvases. This parenthesis finished—this success, on cognate lines, of a brother artist, gladly allowed—we return, for a few minutes, to the consideration of Brangwyn.

It was only in the present century's very earliest days that Brangwyn, born about two score years ago, did his first etching. In 1904, he was—considered as an Etcher—yet unknown. By June, 1908, he was the author of One Hundred and Thirty-three prints. That is the number chronicled in the luxurious and valuable publication of The Fine Art Society, which is devoted to setting forth by precept and example the merit and characteristics of his art.[1] Although the principles on which his work proceeded—his aim, for instance, to decorate and enrich a given surface, as Sculpture decorates building—may be assumed to have been fixed before he executed even the first of his etchings, it is certain that very little in his earliest etchings rose to the level of impressive execution afterwards attained. What, for example, is the "Assisi," what "The Bark-strippers," what even the "Road in Picardy"—and these are but 7, 10, and 8 in the published Catalogue—in comparison with the "Building the Victoria and Albert Museum" and the "Breaking up the 'Hannibal'" (Nos. 42 and 48 in the Catalogue) of presumably a year or two later? These are conceptions of a grim nobility: and they are carried out with power. Perhaps with "The Windmills, Bruges" (62) and the "Meat Market, Bruges" (No. 117) they may be said to reach the high-water mark of Brangwyn's achievement. Of the "Windmills," Mr. Frank Newbolt—in the Fine Art

[1] *The Etched Work of Frank Brangwyn, A.R.A., R.E.* The Fine Art Society, Limited: 1908.

Society's book—writes a good sentence: "The windmill, which in the drawing is only a windmill, becomes in the etching a fortress of labour, assailed by the powers of the air." And that is meant to indicate that the subject grows as Brangwyn pursues his theme upon the copper or the zinc—or transfers it from the paper to the metal—and that, of the medium finally adopted, the artist has an appropriate command.

I spoke, a page or two back, of Brangwyn's "simplified design"; in that phrase there was no thought of fault-finding: and simplified design, as well as visible design—that is, the domination of design over detail—is quite a part of the new movement, and has a right to be accounted, in its own place, a virtue. Now, as Mr. Brangwyn made that quality a feature of his other work before he ever etched at all—made it a quality of "The Buccaneers," as long ago as 1893, one remembers, when that canvas appeared in the Salon—it is not surprising that it was serviceable in his hand when he etched (so early that the print's number is but 24) "The Storm." And "The Storm" is a simplified Constable; but a Constable in which Nature submits herself to the requirement of ordered Design.

In size—and size has been a good deal mentioned—Brangwyn's etchings differ very much. Some of them are only a few inches long: others there are that fall little short of a yard. Now, in my opinion, the absence of the slightest need that a scale so large as the last named should be employed is proved, or can be proved, by comparing these vast prints themselves, or even a print less vast than these, but still unusually large ("The Storm," say) with the diminished reproductions of the same in the Fine Art Society's book. Has the performance, through that substantially diminished but still of course not

attenuated scale, lost a jot of its dignity? Is it not less encumbered by mere superfluous matter? Is not its essential grandeur, its largeness of Style, retained fully? I think it can scarcely be questioned that this is so.

But if that is our conviction, we do not go on from it, by any means, to dictate hard-and-fast rules—to be the advocates of narrow restrictions. In the art of Etching there is room for an extraordinary variety of scale of surface, as there is for an extraordinary variety of depth of biting. To speak of surface only, it is possible to admit, contentedly, finding no fault with either craftsman —applauding, on the contrary, his choice—"The Meat-Market" or "The Salute" of Mr. Brangwyn—of which the latter and the larger is some fifteen inches by eleven—and the "Fruit Shop" or the "Palais Royal" of Whistler, which, as far as scale goes, might decorate a patch-box, but be too small for a bonbonnière.

CHAPTER XXVII

WHISTLER

IF it is—as most men know it is—incontestably the right of Rembrandt to be given amongst Etchers the first place, it is certain that at this time—and not I think less justly—the two Masters who stand next to him in the esteem of connoisseurs and of the Criticism that counts are Méryon and Whistler. They stand next in part by reason of the extent and the variety, but yet more because of the force and fascination of their work.

About Rembrandt and about Méryon I have had my say, so far, it seems, as it was suitable to have it in these pages. And now the obligation is laid upon me to discuss Whistler here; and again the discussion must be within limits not precisely narrow, but not so wide as to leave room for more than a selection from the facts of which the intending connoisseur desires sooner or later to be apprised, and from the opinions, judgments, in which it is possible he may take an interest. Between the well-considered *aperçu* and the treatment more or less exhaustive there is with difficulty, in these matters, a middle way.

But before speaking of the course and character of Whistler's work, something should be said of the "documents"—that is the word—that bear upon it.

Of the several Catalogues of Whistler's Etchings that now exist, two appeared during the lifetime and worktime of the artist. Mr. Thomas's was issued in 1874. It gave a list of Eighty Etchings. My *Whistler's*

Etchings: a Study and a Catalogue appeared in 1888, and in it—in its First Edition—were described Two Hundred and Fourteen prints. A Second Edition appeared in 1899: the number of described prints—owing mainly to work executed in the interval—had swollen to Two Hundred and Sixty-seven. Three years later, an American "Supplement" to my Catalogue contained nearly a hundred numbers: the prints chronicled being almost exclusively minor ones. Mr. Howard Mansfield's Catalogue and interesting narrative, issued from the Caxton Club, of Chicago, in 1909—covering old ground as well as new—made mention of no less than Four Hundred and Forty pieces; the increased number being (as in the case of the Supplement) partly due to sketches on the copper made by Whistler after the appearance of my Second Edition, and partly, too, to the industrious inclusion of other pieces, of slight importance, speaking generally. A few of these I must have overlooked: the rest I had deliberately, with Whistler's approval, even sometimes at his direct request, not mentioned—because it seemed to him, and seemed to me, that a man had a right to some modest control over the acknowledgment or the discarding of plates that he had wrought. Whistler wrought no large proportion indeed, but still a certain number of plates, that he did not think worthy of him; and these plates, for the most part, I was glad to leave in the obscurity that he desired. It may well be, however, that he was afterwards of opinion that such obscurity should not be permanent.

A fourth Catalogue—a list, in this case without any descriptions by which the identity of the etching was to be established, or (what may sometimes be hardly less important) its spirit, aim, and point made visible to our understanding, but furnished most elaborately with re-

productions of each print in various States—was issued by the Grolier Club in New York, a few months after Mr. Mansfield's in Chicago. It had long been preparing. Mr. E. G. Kennedy—the American dealer—who had supplied the "Supplement"—was chiefly, it would seem, responsible for it. As a *livre de luxe*, and of what is called "scientific" interest—a work crowded, that is, with the pictorial record of minute differences (the press-side variations, often, of an artist who enjoyed printing), it will hold its place. How far the multiplication of States, that it encourages, is advisable, is open to question. But the procedure of Mr. Mansfield merits the same query. It is possible—it seems to me—to be too elaborate for lucidity—too intricate for practical convenience.

And now having spoken, not ungratefully certainly, but with reserved approval, of the method of the American amateur who has just been named again, it is agreeable to me to begin such study of Whistler's Etchings as this present volume must contain, by a quotation from Mr. Mansfield, in which I recognize a general appreciation of the artist, very happily expressed, and very slightly exaggerated. Its three or four discriminating sentences say very much what during many years I have had to say at greater length, because with some argument, some attempt at persuasion. The argument is not now necessary; and if what one is accustomed to call and to consider the intelligent Public has got itself convinced, length may now be superfluous. Let us hear Mr. Mansfield—speaking of what in part was the result of the Exhibitions which, in London, in Paris, and in Boston, followed pretty closely upon Whistler's death.

These exhibitions were a clear demonstration that here was a marvellous artist, who had explored with signal achievement nearly every realm of Art. He now stood revealed to the world as a painter who com-

pelled technical mastery to serve the supreme purpose of beautiful expression. Thus he produced portraits which might take their places with the masterpieces of the centuries, delineations of figures that are enchanting through the blended charm of grace and colour, "nocturnes" unsurpassed in their rendering of the tranquil loveliness of the night, marines wonderful in their interpretation of the changeful and entrancing moods of the sea. It was also perceived how wide was the range of the exquisite creations he had wrought through the medium of Water Colour and Pastel. The extent of his work in Lithography came as a revelation to the many, while the delightfulness of the lithographs became a joy to all. From a comprehensive view of his Etchings it became clear that in keenness of observation and range of appreciation, in faculty of selection and power of concentrative and concise expression, in masterly use of line and effective rendering of contrasts of light and shade, in boldness and strength and in delicacy and refinement as well, Whistler was not only the unsurpassed etcher, but a supreme artist.

I think I should take no further exception to this excellently pronounced eulogy than just to note that it ignored the artist's few deficiencies and minimized the importance of tasks he never essayed. These reservations made—and I will not enlarge on them—what is here expressed is the truth, intelligently seen. That part of the pronouncement that is concerned with Whistler's Etching is made with singular felicity—the result of an immense acquaintance. That part which is concerned with Whistler's other achievements is an appropriate reminder of the place in which this artist stands. He stands, as Rembrandt did, midway—in regard to his pursuits, I mean—between, on the one hand, such etchers as Claude and Vandyke, Bega, Geddes, Ribot, Jongkind, who were painters for the most part, but who etched admirably and delightfully in their limited hours, and, on the other hand, such etchers as Hollar, Méryon, Jacquemart, Haden, whose long work on the copper was, with few and relatively insignificant exceptions, the Alpha and the Omega of their practice and their Art.

A draughtsman from quite early days at West Point,

where he was employed in some connection with the Coast Survey—a painter, with the wish to be a professional painter, in Paris, in 1856—Whistler, who was born at Lowell, Massachusetts, in the summer of 1834, began to etch during the year that followed his entry into Gleyre's studio: that is in 1857. While at Gleyre's, or very soon indeed after he left that atelier, he was the associate, not only of painters like Fantin and Bonvin, but of one man who was a great etcher already—Bracquemond—and of another who ere long was to be a great etcher—Alphonse Legros. Those were the early days of the French Revival of the aquafortist's art. Delâtre, the unequalled or at least the unsurpassed printer—who often printed Méryons, and who printed for Whistler his first issued Etchings: those which constitute the French Set—must have made—could hardly indeed avoid making—his workrooms the rallying-point for the students and practitioners of the craft that, having been neglected in the main since the end of the Seventeenth Century, was now again to be in vogue. The men who have been named had uphill work, however, in getting themselves accepted. Their work, in those first days, appeared to be destined for themselves and for a few. It was years, really, before even the connoisseur's serious attention was vouchsafed to their labours—further years still before they, or any of them, became at all the fashion with even the most intelligent bourgeois purchasers, or with people of the world.

Whistler's French Set was issued late in 1858. He was himself, by that time, at Seymour Haden's, in Sloane Street, and was engaged already or immediately afterwards with his more famous work upon the Thames—those River plates, of 1859 for the most part, of which he sold, himself, a very few impressions, but which long

awaited formal publication, and—when formal publication came—were not in the first instance well printed. They should be seen, generally speaking, in the earlier proofs —the best of all—(Whistler's own printing or Delâtre's) or in the later issued form for which the Fine Art Society and Mr. Keppel secured the printing of the best English printer—Goulding. The Ellis and White impressions are, as a rule, meagre.

These two Sets—the French and the Thames Etchings —constitute the bulk of the early portion of Whistler's etched work. We may conveniently think of and speak of them together. I see that Mr. Mansfield holds that the French Set has a method of its own, to which Whistler never reverted. That is an opinion for which I do not quite see the grounds. To me the French Set has not so much one method, which it might be possible either to revert to or avoid, as a method or methods more or less uncertain and unfixed—though not on that or any account ineffective. I should describe it rather as the preparation, unconscious perhaps, perhaps conscious, for the method which in the Thames Set was, for the time being, definitely adopted—although when formal publication came, years after the best pieces of the Thames Set had been wrought, mere lapse of time allowed to be added to it two prints which had little in common with its general spirit: I mean "Cadogan Pier," a dreamy, dainty dry-point—and "Chelsea Bridge and Church," a piece wrought less successfully, when the artist was again in a period of transition.

In any case, not only the Second Set, but the First (the French Set) also, contains and mainly consists of beautiful things—pieces crowded with artistic instinct, quick and most painstaking observation, and spirited chronicle. In the French Set, there is noticeable the

simple farmyard subject, "Liverdun"—of which I know that Whistler never got to disapprove—the "Marchande de Moutarde," in which, very happily, Whistler approached the task of the Genre painter, occupied of course, as De Hooch would have been occupied, with illumination, with still life, as well as with character. There is to be noticed, too, "La Vieille aux loques"—a wondrous study of old age—"Fumette," an agreeable and original vision of arch, brisk youth; and, mainly for illumination vivid and subtle (a De Hooch indeed!) "The Kitchen"—of which I consider that the First State (the issued State it was, in that early time) is only the *ébauche* for the quite exquisite thing this plate became, when, a full score of years afterwards, the artist took it up again and made it perfect. "The Kitchen" is a plate which no Collector could willingly be without; but it is urgent that he should seek it, not in the original state, except as curiosity and preparation, but in the earliest and finest impressions of the edition issued by the Fine Art Society.

And now, more particularly of the Thames Set—a moment or two only. Here there is evidenced as close an adherence to topographical fact, to local truth, as if Hollar himself had been the etcher—but the needle, how constantly expressive, and, one might say, sometimes, how witty!—and the drawing, of what decision, and of what finesse! The life of the River, half a century ago—the River "below Bridge," with the quaint warehouses and taverns, the wherries, barges, clippers, all the waterside population—lies before us, realized so fully, and yet with its appeal to the imagination, in these brilliant and exquisite pages. What a rhythm of line in the succession of barges in "The Pool"! What interest, not only in the buildings, but in the exposed shore at low tide, in

"Thames Police"! What charm of the receding "coast-line"—so to say—in the little "Thames Warehouses"! What an amazing variety of pretty detail—yet what unlost unity!—in "Black Lion Wharf," from the delicate mast lines and cordage lines of the swift clipper to the left, to the wooden balconies and outbuildings and Georgian house-fronts to the right!

The next period—beginning about 1870—is the Leyland period. That is a period of Dry-point; devoted to a large extent to Portraiture, and to studies of the model, although including the fine simplification of "London Bridge," the subtler but yet broadly conceived "Battersea Bridge," and almost—for it dates from 1879—the sunniness and spaciousness and tranquil majesty of "The Large Pool." There figure in it, notably, the three dry-points of the Leyland children; three girls: "Fanny," "Elinor," "Florence." In "Florence"—"I am Flo," she is made to say, on some impressions—there is realized the aplomb of a not particularly sensitive youth; in "Fanny Leyland," a delicate reverie, that befits a delicate nature—the charming little being, whom Whistler, I am sure, was fond of, died young. This period has as its chief purpose and preoccupation the quiet breadth essential to Dry-point.

After that, comes the Venice period, which dates from the first execution—I should say, rather, from the inception—of the Venice plates, to their final accomplishment. When they were first exhibited they were unready and unripe. The critics were quite right in not accepting them enthusiastically, and Whistler was quite wrong in being angry at the reception accorded to them. He had his revenge afterwards, in a way that he allowed himself, after his own fashion—he still, I believe, associated with the finished things, which we admired, the strictures we

had thought fit to make upon them when as yet they were raw.

The Venetian work divides itself, rather accidentally—"incidentally" may be better—into three groups. The first is the *Venice*—twelve etchings—issued as a Set by the Fine Art Society, which—very much, I believe, through the intelligent initiative of Mr. Ernest Brown—had furnished the wherewithal for Whistler's journey to the Adriatic. Doubtless some principle of choice was exercised in the assembling of these particular twelve plates. An obvious variety was probably deemed desirable, and, certainly, the inclusion of a very fair proportion of the plates that make the most immediate, or it may be thought even the most lasting appeal. Thus there are found in the "Venice" Set the "Little Venice"—Venice from afar: a thrice refined and tranquil dream of the Lagoon, and the long, distant line of towered city—and the most stately "Palaces," a record of Venetian Gothic, and "The Doorway" and "The Riva"—from none of which, provided they have arrived at that condition at which they express the aim, fulfil entirely the intention, of the Master, am I concerned to withhold the title of masterpiece.

The *Venice* Set was nominally published in 1880, but most of its best impressions belong to later years.

The second group of Venice themes consists of the Venetian plates which formed by far the greater part of Messrs. Dowdeswell's portfolio, *Twenty-six Etchings:* the rest, a bare half-dozen, being English scenes, such as "Temple," "Wheelwright," "Little Court." These little pieces, homely but dainty—wonderfully and promptly expressive—came in pleasantly enough with the Venetian; but it was the Venetian that secured for the Set the prestige it has almost from its first publication enjoyed. Here, in the "San Biagio," was an amazing, unforgettable

LITTLE VENICE

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rendering of the Venice of squalor and beauty; and, in "The Balcony," a rendering well-nigh of beauty alone; and, in "The Bridge," a vision of a remote and little-visited district (for the bridge is the mere foreground of the composition); and, in "The Garden," and that other garden piece called "Turkeys," the most life-like and graceful and sympathetic portrayal of the ways of common folk in the intimacy of gossip, or the intimacy of leisure, with their proper frame and *décor* of humble dwellings and of courtyard gardens.

The third group was that which really is a group by accident: it consists of such of the Venetian subjects as are included neither in the Fine Art Society's *Venice* nor in the Dowdeswell *Twenty-six Etchings*, which were published in 1886.

In the Venetian pieces—particularly in that majority of them which deal more or less with Architecture—the effect aimed at, and, in the best cases, attained, is one not only of less visible precision than in the Thames Etchings of what Mr. Mansfield would call Whistler's second, but of what I prefer to speak of as his first definitely adopted method; but it is likewise of less visible and indeed less actual breadth (though never, I need hardly say, of trivial minuteness) than is the simpler dry-point work of the Leyland period. The touch, in the record of buildings, whatever they may be, is, in Whistler's Venetian period, a different touch from that of any earlier day. It can indicate the bare and the squalid: it can be of expressive richness. The Venetian pieces are so varied in their interest and objects, it is not to be wondered at that Whistler—by that time, too, in his full mid-career, and master of so many means—made them sometimes of singular intricacy, and this by methods the most diverse. Touches of dry-point, added at the press-side, sometimes

as a little, just-perceived improvement, and sometimes as a necessity through wear, cause variations of which it is interesting to take cognizance; and, as regards Printing, never were its resources more thoroughly exploited than by Whistler in these Venetian prints. "Furnace: Nocturne" and "Lagoon: Noon" (both in the *Twenty-six Etchings*) afford evidence of the truth of my last statement. Here—and in the second named perhaps especially—the inking of the plate and the wiping of it is so managed that the plate is, so to say, painted on.

To the work of the Venetian period there succeeded, in its turn, work of yet again a different order. Roughly speaking, two other orders of print occupied Whistler during the twenty years remaining to him—years, we must remember, in which, as often before, he sometimes etched considerably, and sometimes did not etch at all: for Whistler showed no constancy—I mean no consecutive devotion—to any given medium: now Etching, now Painting occupied him—now Lithography.

The two other orders of Print are themselves capable of subdivision. A complete analysis should name their different constituents. But for our purposes at present it is enough to distinguish between the curiously slight and—with their several methods—the rather curiously elaborate. The first years after Venice abound in instances of the former: the little copper used like a notebook—a memorandum is entered upon it: nothing more. To this order belong "Fragment of Piccadilly"—one of the most insignificant coppers ever chronicled by Cataloguer—"Sketch in St. James's Park"—graceful at least, and, though of extreme slightness, worthier to exist for its own sake—then "Sketch of Battersea": a jotting of the old wooden bridge—and "Steamboat Fleet": a memorandum of paddle-steamers. Most of the "Jubilee"

or "Naval Review" Series are notes and nothing else; but one of them, "Southampton Docks," has full consideration lying behind it, and though it may carry elimination to its utmost limit, it is a picture conceived, a picture brilliantly executed. Rembrandt could not have done better. Again, what an alert point, what a refined flexibility, is evident in the smaller "Fruit Shop": the No. 210 of my Catalogue: the "Greengrocer's Shop" of Mr. Mansfield's nomenclature—and Mr. Mansfield has some reason on his side; but that was not Whistler's name for it. But in the years that came between 1880 and 1888 (roughly speaking), these were the exceptions. Generally the memorandum predominated. After that, there was the return to the more or less habitual pursuit of patient and, for the art of Black and White, of thorough realization.

This return, which, amongst other advantages, commended Whistler to the attention of a less restricted public, is first visible in the best Brussels subjects—"Palace, Brussels" and "Grande Place, Brussels" possibly chief of them. Here, however, there survives—I know that that is another question—something of the characteristic Venetian touch. The method changes more notably from any previously employed when Whistler is engaged upon his Dutch group. Of course it is true—and one is glad that it is true—that even here are plates sufficiently reminiscent of previous achievements. The method—to some extent the vision—of "The Balcony" and of "Two Doorways" is recalled in "Pierrot, Amsterdam"—with its basement floor of a house on a Dutch canal. And the "Zaandam," with its endless plain, its world of windmills against a lowering sky, is a masterpiece of which it may be thought that the germ existed already in "Southampton Docks," with its waterside

sheds and far-stretched low-lying lands. But "Square House" is an obviously detailed study of Amsterdam building—open shops or workrooms reflected more or less in the water—a study to which, did we not know that genius has enduring youth, it would seem to us rather remarkable that Whistler, elderly, should have addressed himself. "Balcony, Amsterdam" is a night effect, showing something of another fluctuation in practice; but I suppose the "Nocturne, Dance House" to be the most conspicuous instance of departure from the Past—of adaptation of the ever-fresh talent to the new situation, with its new requirements. And with that mention of it it is not inappropriate to close what one may call a little sketch-map of Whistler's career as an Etcher. For that is all, I think, this chapter aims to be.

CHAPTER XXVIII

OTHER AMERICANS

HOW is it that America—where Etching is so much and so intelligently encouraged and valued—has produced only one really great Etcher? I mean, only one apart from Whistler—who, although of American blood, was American scarcely at all in training, practice, sympathy. Alas! in Art there is but little connection between Demand and Supply. If Art is wanted, commercial art can be invoiced to you—but it will not very long suffice in the place of genius. The wind bloweth whither it listeth; and, in the matter of Etching, the wind of Art has not set very seriously for the United States.

Parrish and Duveneck in their own day, Pennell and Webster in ours—they are respectable names. No one denies cleverness to Pennell. Emerging from the stage of the Whistlerian influence—the Whistlerian dominance, shall I say?—at all events in method—and ceasing, much about the same time, to be almost entirely the pictorial journalist, the pictorial reporter, this combative child of the American Republic, this Pennsylvanian whose spirit, as expressed in his occasional writings, at least never reminds one of William Penn, has displayed a creditable ability. Latterly, moreover, he has had the wisdom to address himself to themes of his own, and plates published but a couple of years ago or so by Messrs. Keppel—energetic furtherers of Etching in America—reveal, in work of his in London and New York, what is best of all revealed in the "sky-scrapers": that he has had, with

results sufficiently happy, the courage of his opinions, or the courage of his themes.

Webster has been before the public a shorter time: it is as yet too early to appraise his work with any certain correctness—though one welcomes, as a contribution to one's knowledge of it, Mr. Martin Hardie's essay, instructive and cordial. Webster is as sober as Mr. Pennell is, or has been, dashing. He is even, it may be, sometimes a little dry. His actual individuality is not yet fully pronounced, or is not easy to seize. He affects Architecture—Architecture sometimes important, sometimes humble, but always a building of character. To a very reputable point, Mr. Webster knows his business. He is to that extent *un homme du métier*. Not visibly the result of any one master, Webster has rightly learnt from many, and Whistler and Cameron are amongst them. A good American, he has loved and observed Paris. There is one of his plates—a recent and a small one—over which I rise to enthusiasm. Webster's "Quai de Montebello"—mainly a bright, yet eminently patient study of the characteristic lines of a tall old corner-house, within near sight of the river—recalls, in its particular theme, in its particular treatment, in its especial unity of impression and effect, one lateish but finely wrought Méryon—not a great thing, but an exquisite thing, an admirable minor piece—the "Rue Pirouette." Yes; I can believe that the great, simple Méryon, so generous in his appreciation of the ability of others, would have welcomed as quite akin to that small piece of his that I have mentioned, and as worthy to be put by the side of it, Mr. Webster's study of this ancient house with its pure lines, its many memories: Mr. Webster's "Quai de Montebello"—so modestly perfect.

Parrish and Duveneck—of whom the former made

Landscapes in America, and the latter smart shorthand notes of the aspects of the life of Venice nearly forty years ago—belong to a time when the smart, promptly effective sketch on the one hand, and the laborious, faithful record on the other hand, were allowed—provided only that they were made upon copper—a credit that would scarcely to-day attach to them. Really, they were nearer than would be tolerated now—or nearer than would be approved of now—to the work of the amateur. Duveneck's certainly were not addressed to the man in the street, absolutely. To work so summary, the man in the street would not have possessed the key. But they were addressed—or they were calculated to reach—the superficially instructed: those whose ideal is cleverness—those whom the *à peu près* satisfies, if it is reached with sufficient speed and with sufficient flourish. Work of this nature represents, after all, only a passing phase: it is a page that may be forgotten.

To the bourgeois—not to the person superficially taught, who, above everything else, gives praise to Heaven he is not a bourgeois in the least—may have been addressed most of the Etchings of Mr. Parrish They are, so far as I remember, full of positive, unmistakable statement: they are of honest and industrious fidelity: nor are they perhaps without a feeling for the picturesqueness that is obvious, that is tiresome, that ends by seeming to us only a little distressingly prosaic—nothing more.

All this time there has been kept from the reader the name of the one etcher (Whistler *à part*) to whom America has given birth; who, by reason of successes many and various, successes of decision, successes of subtlety and intricate handling, has the chance—the chance at the very least—of being numbered with the great ones. That is

D. S. Mac-Laughlan; born in Canada and, as his name makes plain to us, of Scottish ancestry. At present he is an American citizen, and Boston owned him, and has not cast him out, though it is ten years since he has seen much of Boston, except what can be seen in brief returns to it, between prolonged sojourns in Europe. Not a plate of Mr. Mac Laughlan's has been executed in America. In Boston, he painted. It is in Paris, London, Tuscany, Switzerland, that he has etched. Those are the cities and the lands which have afforded themes to his One Hundred and Fifty prints. Now it is Architecture: now it is Landscape: now it is the life of the great tidal River. Not weak when he began—for he began equipped in some degree for his task through work in another medium—his performances have shown upon the whole a progress far from unbroken, but well marked. Not quite unworthy of his later work, yet of course not equal to it, is the "St. Julien le Pauvre," the first etching, of 1900: St. Julien le Pauvre with its local colour already noted, its pleasant scheme of light and shade: the humble church (Cameron also has etched it), hidden away somewhere between the gorgeous Gothic of St. Severin and the island that holds Notre Dame. Two other and rather later etchings—representing or giving promise of the skill and judgment of Mr. Mac Laughlan's maturity, in so far as their not overpowering themes allow—are "St. Sulpice: la Grande Tour" and "St. Sulpice: la Petite Tour." They are interesting, well-treated subjects, and rightly enough, we may consider, Mr. Mac Laughlan took them as he found them, unconcerned with the circumstance that the towers are no part of Servandoni's work in the great church which is associated with his name.

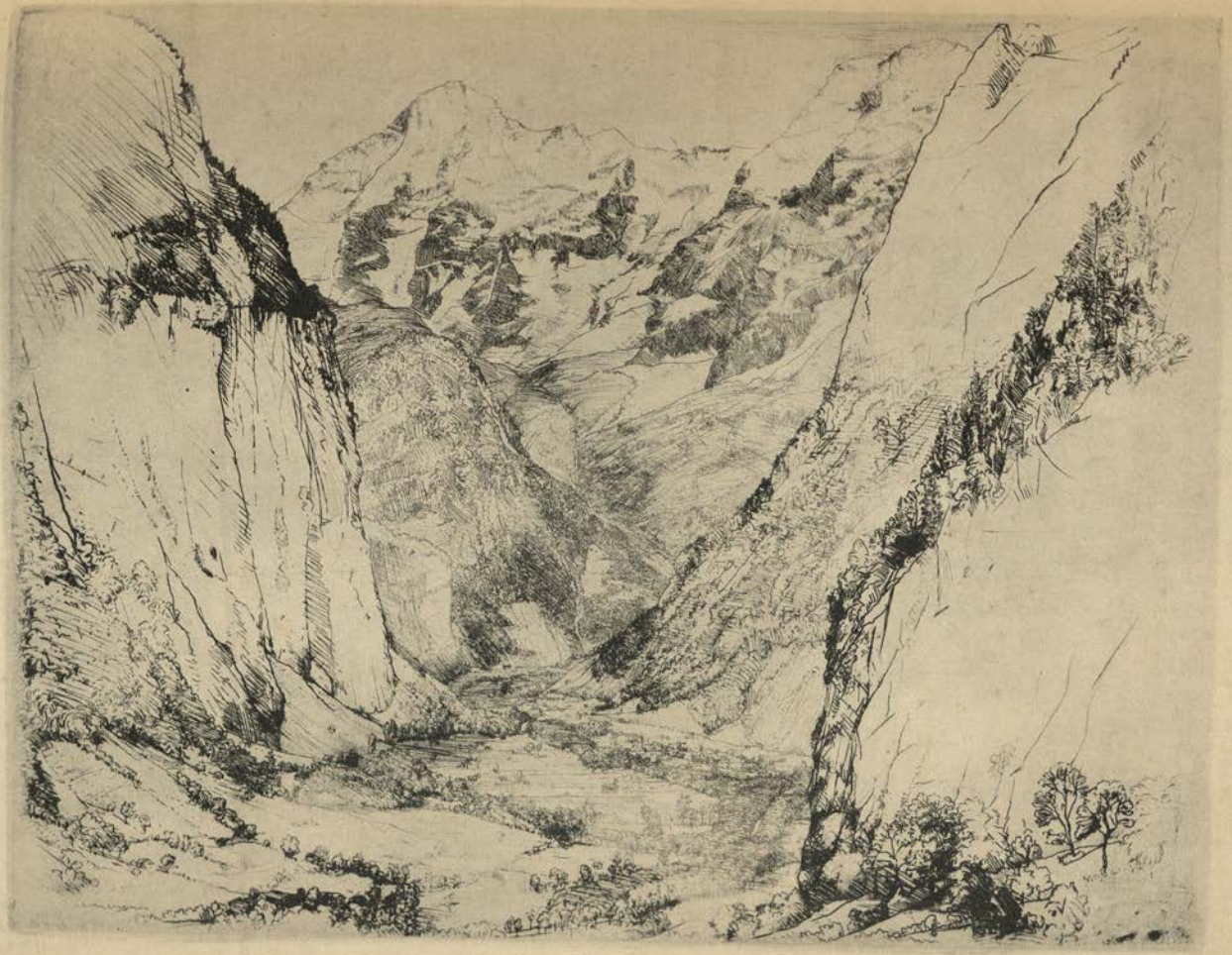
In certain of the Venetian subjects which followed many Parisian ones—for in Paris Mr. Mac Laughlan was

for long a steady sojourner, learning by heart not only the beauty of its monuments, but the interest of its often strongly contrasted even when adjacent quarters—in Venice, I say, this artist managed to hold his own, to *se tirer d'affaire;* but it is not there that his greatest successes are to be chronicled. Respectable and capable always, never flashily attractive—his works therefore generally ending in being given a higher place than at first appeared to be theirs—Mr. Mac Laughlan did not perhaps more than once or twice in Venice reach a note whose novelty was essentially delightful. He did reach it in the print happily known as "The Canal of the Little Saint": the thoroughly poetic and individual record of a side-stream which I think of, not by resemblance, but almost by equality of merit, with the "Quiet Canal," or even that yet nobler thing of Whistler's, "Ponte del Piovan." Again, the "Fields of San Gemignano" sum up adequately the agrarian life of Tuscany—sum it up like a fine pencil-drawing of Fulleylove's.

Paris has furnished—it is beyond a doubt—the greater number of Mac Laughlan's best, of his most fruitful, themes; yet it is in work—it is in two or three of the comparatively few plates—wrought in Switzerland and London, and those two or three plates produced within the last two years, or thereabouts, that we find the high-water mark of Mac Laughlan's achievement. Had I perforce to say which, above all others, were the most desirable of his plates—the most remunerative to study, the most impressive to live with—I should name, I think, "Low Tide" and "The Life of the Thames," and, chief, the indubitable masterpiece, "Lauterbrunnen." The two named first are the more immediately acceptable; nor do they, in the least, pall upon full acquaintance. Let us consider them first.

"The Life of the Thames"—the title of that one of these pieces which has the long-stretched, rather coldly and yet interestingly Classical Custom House for its architectural background—is a title that would fit equally both of these important coppers. Really it is the characteristic of both that it is the life of the Thames that it sets before us—its stir and movement of Humanity: the human energy that sets into intricate movement the steamer and the rowing-boat, the locomotive, and the barge and crane. It was very right of Mr. MacLaughlan not to call his piece "The Custom House." Cameron has a plate, "The Custom House"—it is the Custom House and nothing else, substantially, and the Custom House represented exceedingly well. The building interested Cameron: the scene in no way stirred him. He kept his emotion for "Newgate," for the "Tolbooth," for "Loches," and for "St. Gervais," and for the inexhaustible splendours of "St. Laumer" at Blois, and "The Five Sisters," of York. The amateur is happy who possesses his version of the "Custom House," along with that plate of Mr. MacLaughlan's in which the Custom House is merely background. The one is the complement of the other.

"Low Tide"—the second great Thames piece by our American—has the River near Charing Cross for its scene. Mr. MacLaughlan has got himself almost under the great Charing Cross Railway Bridge, whose sheets of iron, whose funnels, tubes, or hollow columns of iron, blacken his foreground and circumscribe his vision of the sky. It is not a bad day, however; the reflections of boats upon the water show that the sky must have been pleasant—but Mr. MacLaughlan had no eyes for it: they were bent upon the craft, the railway smoke, the crowding barges, broad and flat, the further stretch of peopled and churned water, Waterloo Bridge in mid-distance: beyond



LAUTERBRUNNEN

that, delightful, delicate bits of remote background. Not imitating Whistler in the very least—seeing things quite with his own eyes, and setting down the record of them with his own touch—the younger American seems in this plate, nevertheless, to have used, justly and effectively on a single copper, those different techniques, different methods, which in Whistler's labours are rarely used together, but which are represented, the one of them by the early Thames Etchings of 1859, uniformly precise, and the other by such a late Thames Etching as "The Large Pool," of fifteen or twenty years later, uniformly broad. "Low Tide," then, over and above the interest of its theme, considered and treated with such grasp and such vivacity, is notable as an example of how completely and richly, by this time, Mac Laughlan knows, possesses, can dispose for his own purposes, the language of Etching.

One last word, about "Lauterbrunnen." It interests me, first, to be informed that "Lauterbrunnen" was the outcome of a sudden sense, upon the part of its author, of the Alps' impressiveness. Mere snow heights and inaccessible pine woods had been a bore to him—they were a something with which Humanity had little to do. Suddenly there came to Mr. Mac Laughlan—and perhaps one reason why I enjoy the plate so profoundly is that I have felt in quite that way myself—suddenly there came to him a sense of the amazing and thought-inspiring contrast between the austere heights, the vast stone masses, and the companionableness and fertility of the peopled plain. And that is what he has interpreted—made clear to us. With high imagination and with masculine art, with a hold upon reality the firmer and more intense because of all that he received in his poetic vision, he has brought the two together. The "Lauterbrunnen" is a record, and it is a creation.

CHAPTER XXIX

ANDERS ZORN

ZORN is an etcher who at first interests, then disconcerts, then—and for ever afterwards—quite charms the Collector. And there is more than one reason for the Collector of Zorn's work going through these stages of appreciation and doubt. For this undoubtedly great artist—true child of an advanced, unprejudiced race; a veritable Swede indeed, a Frenchman of the North—is a Realist who has burdened himself with few of the conventions: who has cut out for himself his own road. So the first sight one has of any of Zorn's Etchings is sure to give one a moment of arrested attention. "This is something fresh." Then its almost obtrusive modernness, the degree of its freshness—perhaps, in some cases, also the seeming banality of its theme—starts a suspicion, occasions a reaction, and one says, "No; it is 'cheap'—I must go back to the Classic." The Classic, whether it be the Classic of Vandyke and Claude or the modern Classic of Whistler, one respects and enjoys; but, studying Zorn, one reaches before long the conclusion that Zorn is destined to be a Classic, also.

During thirty years of practice—he is about fifty years old—Zorn has wrought more than two hundred plates. Broadly speaking, each one of all this company of prints is devoted to the study of human character or form: the face or figure may have as a background some

rough but vivid suggestion of an interior, or some suggestion of landscape: it may have some ample hint of atmosphere: some visible concern with the passage of shadow and light. But an interior for an interior's sake, a landscape for a landscape's sake, I hardly know in all the work of Zorn. Men and women are his subjects. And I have spoken—have I?—of the seeming banality of some of his themes. The word is justified by certain of his pieces which record—and with no moral on his part—the restless, showy idleness of this or that daughter of the newly rich, in America. It would not be justified by anything in Zorn's treatment of the peasantry, dressed or naked, of his native land. His etchings of his naked bathers, naked models, half-naked servants, busied now with a rudimentary toilette and now with "household chares," are a Hymn to healthy Beauty—his record of which is none the less original and worthy because it is so modern, so vivid, and so real.

Zorn's etched work begins with one of two portraits of that etcher—his senior by full twenty years—through whom he himself was led to etch. That was Axel Haig—his fellow-countryman. But the first print of Axel Haig—a head and shoulders only—Haig smiling—although vivacious, capable, clever, is nothing in comparison with the piece done only two years later—a half-length, showing the etcher as he bends over his plate, all his mind absorbed in earnest and happy labour. This second portrait—No. 17 in M. Loys Delteil's exhaustive and carefully executed Catalogue—is really the beginning of the fine series of portraits which, together with their generally later companions, the healthy studies of the healthy nude, ensure for Zorn his great place. It was done in 1884.

Between these two portraits of Haig comes a little group of character studies, bits of Genre, bits of domestic

incident, executed, as it seems, in Spain, whither, as to England itself, Zorn came, for a while, in his earliest manhood. After the second Haig, there is nothing perhaps very memorable until the portrait of Antonin Proust —a former Minister of Fine Art—dated 1889—in which the carriage of the man, quite as much as his countenance, reveals a character of curious and alert suavity. The favourite "Rosita Mauri" belongs to the same year. It is exactly one of the things which lays Zorn open—on one's first acquaintance with it—to the charge of brilliant superficiality. But, in the end, while the impression of brilliance remains, that of superficiality vanishes. The treatment, of ready decisiveness, was the one fitted to seize this dancer's character and charm—not very subtle, I suppose; not very complicated. She danced at Barcelona while almost a child. Gounod introduced her, later, to the Grand Opera, and there for years she was a star; and since she was a star, she is a teacher. It seems it has become her elevated destiny to direct the *classe de perfectionnement*.

Passing by etched studies of very various character—now a group of people at a *soirée dansante*, now a head with reverie in it, or instant enjoyment, and now a slightly draped, not very elegant figure in keen morning light ("Le Matin")—passing by too, yet noting as exceptions in Zorn's work, by reason of the concentration in them of interest upon landscape, those practically isolated pieces "L'Orage" (a rider, and the elements perturbed) and "Folkestone" (a mere hasty study of a tract of water)—we come to one of the most fearless, most famous, and most sought for studies of womankind —the portrait of that typical shrewd bourgeoise, Mme. Simon, of whom I know nothing but what I see in Zorn's portrait. More than one chronicler of daily life

in Paris could have recorded, quite as well as Zorn, "L'Omnibus," and from these studies, faithfully prosaic, one goes on gladly to an absolute masterpiece in portraiture; a performance that nothing done of the same kind in all the Nineteenth Century, or sometime further back, has ever bettered: I mean the great "Renan."

No one who collects Zorn at all can afford to be without the "Renan." Whether the amateur has fifty pieces, out of the couple of hundred, or whether he has only five, the "Renan" is bound to be one of them. In conception entirely modern, and in handling (like most of Zorn's work indeed) entirely personal, this is a portrait which, through the instantaneous elevation of Zorn's spirit to the mountain level of the task that lay before him, may be placed, without suffering, by any Vandyke or by any Latour. By sudden strokes and certain, the whole of Renan is there—the philosopher's earnest reverie, the satirist's humour, the man's tenderness, the fat invalid's carriage. Armand Dayot, who was the intermediary in the business, tells us that leave to make the portrait was granted on condition that there should be one sitting, and that that should last but for an hour. Zorn has written: "He was ill. I studied him while he installed himself—I took my copper; I drew him." Here M. Loys Delteil, punctiliously accurate, steps in to remind us: "Il y a une légère erreur. Zorn éxécutait d'après nature, non pas l'eau-forte, mais un dessin au crayon." Very well: all that was in the drawing is in the print, certainly; and there is there, to boot, a something given by a memory more than ordinarily retentive, and by the emotion of a great theme.

I do not think that any woman—not even that *bonne bourgeoise*, Mme. Simon—has been analysed by Zorn with such thoroughness as he has brought to bear

upon several portraits of men. If any has, it is the sympathetic and wholly refined character of Mrs. Atherton Curtis; undoubtedly most subtly indicated in the portrait group of herself and her husband. This has something very intimate. But generally the American woman of the world turns to you, in Zorn's portrait of her, just the side that in the world is in evidence. Often the American woman of Zorn's portraiture—more or less fashionable, and the customer, or "client," always of a very good dressmaker remains at bottom commonplace, though handsome, and is grasped superficially. What is put before you generally, is not a mind, but a façade. With the men, whether Frenchmen or Americans, how different! See Mr. Deering, the soul of delicate amiability. See the late Henry Marquand, the elderly Collector, of thoughtful mien, and reserved utterance, and wary step. See the sculptor, St. Gaudens, with his model, crouched behind him. See Berthelot, all concentrated attention, and D'Estournelle de Constant, distinguished, grave, and good. See Anatole France, fantastic and amusing: in placid rapture at having been delivered of a sentence that is perfect, and of a witticism that tells.

We come back to the Dalecarlian peasant-girl, to the nude figure, and to the life in summer-time in the North: the long, clear days; the hills; the lake; the boat; the model. Here the economy of means is most visible and most assured: the labour of the hand, decisive, swift—backed by the possession of an accumulated knowledge. In these prints, Art reaches us in its quintessence—and the joy of life—and a firm energy makes possible the magic of the touch: charges with meaning the chosen stroke, the chosen dot. Little point after point, in quick succession, outlines the arm of the poised girl in

RENAN

ZORN

one print—it does all, and more than all, that could be done by the most obviously elaborate modelling. For this, remember, is a study of light and movement, or of light and attitude, quite as much as of line. In the wonderful "L'Été" it is a sculptural little figure—a figure firm as bronze, and plump with intact youth—that embodies, represents, and is a part of the June weather that surrounds her. Then the barefooted "Ida," model and handmaiden, sits, with perfect insouciance—a useful candle, that sheds illumination just where her work requires it, held between her feet. Again—a studio scene this time—there is the grace—the even rare, true elegance—of the figure in "La Première Séance." Again, a movement of *intimité* Degas must value—he has himself never surpassed it—in the more homely, but attractive "Anna se coiffant." And, last, there is the study of the contours of the flesh of "Berit"—a *chair de femme*, emphatically—beheld in soft and luminous shadow. Reality and beauty have seldom been more subtly combined, in any Art, than in these studies of the vigorous nude—the nude with which the art of Etching has so rarely been happily occupied.

Against these triumphs we put one vulgar failure—the recent print of "The New Maid." Zorn—gifted creature—has no certain hold on the traditions of fine taste. It is not very remarkable, perhaps, that once during a lifetime an artist should have wrought such common stuff. But it would be very remarkable if any judge of noble prints desired to possess it.

A word, to end with, on the technique of Zorn, which has not changed greatly in the course of years. It is distinguished by frankness, decisiveness—seemingly even at times by unrestrained impulsiveness, as of a company of soldiers making a sortie suddenly—a dash forwards,

and the fury of the assault. There is method in all of its madness. Every *hachure*, slashing, sabring—as it were—the copper, falls finally into its place: and all the work has unity. The lines are broad and clear: in themselves distinguished more by resolution than grace. There is the simple fearlessness of a great surgeon—and a great surgeon's knowledge.

The subtleties of Printing, Zorn has cultivated but little: he has dispensed in the main with the order of effect which these may compass, and he has dispensed with them without injury to the particular effects it has been his will to produce. Every good etching requires careful printing—but the recipe for printing Zorn is generally a simple one: its execution quite within the range of any craftsman who is decently capable.

L'ÉTÉ

ZORN

CHAPTER XXX

SOME PRINCIPLES, AND THE PRACTICE OF ETCHING

IN accordance with the methods of the Series which this volume goes to join, I append a certain number of pages mainly occupied with Technique. But they are relatively few, because I have to remember that Etching is not mainly craft, but a something created—the expression of Emotion or of Thought. Great minds—Rembrandt's mind and Claude's—have spoken through it. Etching is not a minor Art. It is nothing, or a part of the highest.

The group that constitutes the Etching family consists of four members. Etching itself—strict etching—may be called the head of the House. Dry-point and Soft-ground Etching and Aquatint, the other members, are three near kinsmen. We will consider briefly, each in his turn, the members of the family; and with the head of the House we must begin.

First, however, let it be premised, and thoroughly understood, that nothing that I say here, about the different qualifications and functions, can, as far as the craftsman is concerned, possibly take the place of what is said in the most authoritative of those books—they are sometimes small books—that treat of technique alone. Æsthetic Criticism, fortified by a few facts, and accompanied by a little comment in the way of historical narrative—criticism devoted to the appreciation of the mental qualities of the bigger people and the impressions

they can succeed in carrying to us—suffers only incidental allusions, or at most brief ones, to technical processes. Here then—instead of any assertion of authority or importance—let there be acknowledged my indebtedness to such practitioners of the craft of Etching as happen to have written about it, and to those, most, whose work I know best: to Seymour Haden, for instance, of whose mind, sagacious as it was, and original, the judicial quality was not indeed a characteristic—Haden was a brilliant, fully convinced, wise advocate of Etching, rather than its impartial and quite disinterested judge. Again, there is my debt to P. G. Hamerton, who worked a little in the Fine Arts, and who was born with a love of beautiful things, and much faculty of understanding them—as *Etching and Etchers* testifies—but whom the potent personality of Seymour Haden, whose work he vastly admired, did, to my knowledge, in his judgment of Etching, at one time, greatly influence. Next comes Maxime Lalanne, the elegant artist, who re-enforced in an agreeable treatise the example set by a variety of appropriate work. And, finally, there is Frank Short, a very master of the craft's secrets, who has not Haden-like vividness in Writing, but has an almost Haden-like gift of at least lucid expression in our art of Words—our art of Thoughts. The few remarks I, in this chapter, offer—founded mainly on the knowledge and the opinions of these men—wherever it has been my advantage to be able to accept them—are put forth in the confident hope that they will send on the reader who wishes to know technical matter thoroughly, to the sources of instruction and founts of knowledge I have now named, while being still in themselves perhaps, for the lay student—it may be even to the connoisseur—of assistance to the acquiring of information of a primary kind.

It has been said already — to put it roughly and summarily—that Seymour Haden was advocate. Accordingly, his utterances are not to be trusted, entirely, when he is estimating Line Engraving — upon whose performances he brings to bear what are sometimes unreasonable weapons of ridicule. The line-engraver's art is not all lozenges and dots. But once confine Haden to the discussion of the art that was his, and we find him generally as sound and as penetrating as he is vigorous. I think upon the "principles" of Etching, one is entitled to accept him generally as a guide. He is learned, tolerant, and broad. Therefore, of the Classics and even of his contemporaries, Seymour Haden is an excellent critic. Of the "practice" of the Art—of its actual methods, as they lie within the scope of the very latest of the Moderns—I find Frank Short a curiously engaging and instructive exponent. Two little books, then — the *About Etching* of the elder master, and the *On the Making of Etchings* by the younger—should be in the hands, not only of the would-be practitioner—who may never carry his achievement much beyond the point at which it is entertaining just to himself—but also of the intelligent student and Collector of fine things in Black and White.

"I accord but a secondary place to technical superiority," writes Seymour Haden (but in French that I translate) to Philippe Burty, in 1864, "and to all those qualities which tradition communicates, and which are consequently at everybody's door. The artist should make himself master enough of his processes to give to his thoughts beautiful form. Should he go too far with those processes, the means must become the end, and sentiments and thoughts, instead of dominating, would be dominated by, technical dexterity. I attach no importance to too

minute a labour. The elaboration of detail involves time. Now to spend too much time over a picture is to weaken the conception that prompted it. It is to bury inspiration. The first flame shines from the artist. Elaboration is the workman's affair. Thus the great Masters wrought rapidly—feeling that the sacred fire was quickly burnt out."

As to the kind of subject to be treated, Seymour Haden preferred Landscape. "Je le sens," says he, "plus abordable." And he tells us why. "Nature"—may one translate again?—"is there presented under an aspect that allows me to seize it; while the portrayal of the figure, of action, deals with momentary movements, passing emotions, less likely to rest lastingly before my eyes."

"Etching," writes Haden, "and the methods that are employed for it, may be considered under three aspects: Drawing, 'biting,' and the printed impression. Of these, Drawing—which includes the choice of the subject, its treatment, the instruments employed, the manner of using them—is, naturally, the most important. The genius of the artist and his tastes, and the sentiments that are inspiring him—in Drawing, they are all revealed. The general aspect of a scene, its colour, and its sentiment are what impel me to work; and in the choice of a subject I consider the actual objects very little—the actual details still less." And that he justifies by adding: "The charm of Nature, that air of hers by which she attracts us, are things that have no weight, no volume; and like Light, they are fleeting." Hence, "J'insiste sur une exécution rapide, et, quant aux détails, insouciante." And then, the biting with the acid, Haden says, "should be rapid and vigorous"; and if not done upon the spot, should at least be done before much time has passed. As to "the impression"—as to the printed plate—"il me

semble que tout eau-fortiste doit être son propre imprimeur." And this because the printing is an integral part of the work. "Only the artist can decide accurately between the black and greys, the lights and shadows." The Etcher then must print: must print, at all events, in the first place.

Haden's last note is on "What the Etcher should be." Clearly he must be something much more than a craftsman. First, he must have—it is laid down most rightly—"an innate artistic spirit." Then, "the knowledge that is acquired by a life of devotion"—the "daily and hourly habit of weighing and comparing." The skill that grows out of these gifts and customs is the skill the Etcher requires. "It is the skill of the analyst and of the synthesist—the skill to compound and to simplify—to detach plane from plane, to fuse detail into mass. . . . Finally, it is the acumen to perceive the near relationship that expression bears to form, and the skill to draw them, not separately, but together."

And now—derived mainly from Sir Frank Short—a few words on the practice of the four branches of Etching, and a word, again, of recommendation to the student, to study all the books that I have named.

Sir Frank's first information is, that "an etching must be printed from a metal plate." That information—in the Shakespearean word—was "necessary" when he wrote it, and is "harmless" still. The plate is covered thickly with copperplate ink—a rather thick and greasy substance: it may be of any colour. "The printer proceeds to wipe this gradually away, with a piece of coarse canvas; but where there is any roughness on the plate, such as furrows or pits sunk into it, or pieces of the metal standing up in relief above the general level of the surface, the ink will

not come away. The paper . . . is then laid upon the plate and, by means of heavy pressure, forced into such close contact with it that the printer's ink which was left there adheres to the paper: thus making the print. . . . This process of inking and wiping the plate has, of course, to be repeated for every impression."

What now has preceded this inking, this wiping, and this printing? A good deal. Nothing less, I think, than the whole work of conception and of draughtsmanship—and, except in the case of Dry-point, where biting is not needed, the whole most ticklish business of "biting" with the acid. Before the Etcher may turn printer then, he must have arranged his subject; then have drawn his picture by the removal of the ground, that will expose his plate in those considered places to the acid's action; then have applied his acid with such devices as may be known to him for regulating its force. After that, the printing-press, and the first proof emerging from under the pressure of the cylinder—a pressure, be it noted, not like the flat squeeze of a press for printing type, but a rolling pressure tempered by cloth or blanket, and yet fierce enough not only to take up the ink from the plate, but to mould the paper into every line and crevice on the plate.

"First proofs"—we now return to Sir Frank Short's volume—"are sometimes rather startling things. All along, through the working of the plate, you have been picturing to yourself the look of the proof, and the differences between the image and the one realized by the plate appear all in a moment. . . . It is almost certain to be the case that the plate is either bitten too little in places or too much in others, or both these, or it may be the lines are too open, and patches of bright light appear among the shadows, destroying all depth. Supposing it is too light, or 'underbitten,' and the lines are good in themselves (as of

course they ought to be), there is a method by which they can be made deeper, called 'rebiting.' . . . In the case of the work being too open and requiring more lines, a 'reworking' ground is put on. The new work is now put in, and bitten in the same manner as that on the first ground—the former work remaining the same." If it is wished that some few of the old lines should be bitten more deeply, the needle may be run into them, clearing out the ground sufficiently to get the bite again." As many grounds can thus be put on the plate as is desired, and as many stoppings-out made. "Some Etchers," says Short, "take many days to bite a plate."

Thus far, what has been dealt with are processes towards completion. A word now on "Correcting." Work on a plate is much more accessible to alteration than is a drawing on paper, though many people will be surprised to hear it. Supposing some work upon a plate is too dark—"overbitten"—there are several ways of correcting it. Take the two principal ones: first, the use of the burnisher; second, "charcoaling."

The burnisher is an instrument of steel, and highly polished, and tapered towards the end. "It is rubbed backwards and forwards obliquely over the line it is desired to lighten." Here comes in, or here may come in, some interesting finesse; for the burnisher is "a splendid tool, and many etchers overbite their plates purposely, in order to avail themselves of the gradations that may be obtained by skilfully using it."

And now the second method of correction—and perhaps this is a method of correction only: not of deliberate enhancement of effect—"Charcoaling." When a considerable portion of a plate is too darkly bitten, it can be reduced through rubbing, or grinding the surface away, with charcoal: not—I am told—the soft charcoal an artist uses to

draw with, but a much harsher kind, specially burnt for coppersmiths, from willow and other woods. "Lines which have been reduced by charcoal, print greyly," says the writer of *On the Making of Etchings*.

We approach now the near relatives of Etching—Dry-point, Soft Ground, and Aquatint. Dry-point is used, very frequently, to complete an Etching; "but that is dry-point robbed of its peculiar beauty, by the 'bur' being removed." A dry-point line is made, *tout bonnement*, by scratching it on the plate: the instrument usually a steel needle. This scratching turns up on one or both sides of the line the metal that the process of biting would have destroyed—and the "bur" that has been mentioned in the last quotation is the ridge or ridges thus created. Now, a plate worked entirely in dry-point has all, or at least most, of this "bur" left on it. Printing any considerable number of impressions of course diminishes it. It dwindles, and often does not take long to dwindle, till the thing is a wreck. But while the copper is as yet unghostly—while it is rich, substantial—the line, as every connoisseur knows, prints with a velvety softness, with a gradation that is a mystery and a charm.

Soft-ground Etching—of which the quality closely resembles that of the lithograph—is little practised now. It was practised though, three generations since, by an artist as great as Cotman; and admirable effects have been wrung from it in our day, by Roussel, by Short, and by Miss Constance Pott. I take occasion to quote, almost bodily, Short's own lucid, exact, and terse account of it:—

A ground is laid, with a mixture of ordinary etching ground and tallow, and smoked as for an ordinary etching. . . . A piece of thin paper is now taken and strained over the plate . . . care being taken that no

pressure is put on the ground. Then, carrying the hand on a rest, the design is drawn on the paper with a lead pencil, bearing with a moderately firm pressure, harder in the dark than in the light, just in the same manner as in making a pencil drawing. The paper is now carefully removed from the plate, and it will be found that, where the pencil has gone, the paper has picked up the ground, leaving a dotted line corresponding to the grain of the paper. This is bitten in the same manner as an ordinary etching, and, if necessary, worked up afterwards with other grounds, or with the roulette and dry-point.

Lastly, Aquatint. Aquatint—its plate being bitten by acid—is in reality "tone etching"; yet "Etching" one would not want to call it—the name, less logical, that it has had for generations, it is more convenient to keep; reserving "Etching" for the freely drawn line, such as Rembrandt's line. I had a conversation with Sir Frank upon this point, when—just because I was aware that Aquatint is Etching in truth, though *tone* etching—I sought to represent his own etched work, not by one of his better-known line etchings, but by what is mainly an aquatint: that "Span of Old Battersea Bridge" which will be found in this volume. And—while approving of this last-named project—he wrote to me, after our talk: "If the old *terms*, often illogical, were disturbed, much confusion would result"—and added, as justification for my not making such change here, "In the Turner 'Line' and 'Steel' engravings, nearly all the work was really done by acid—in some cases every bit of it, and in most Line Engraving, save Dürer's, acid is much used." Well! England is used to being illogical...and the *word* must remain!

Of the two "grounds" used in Aquatint, the more easily managed dust ground is that which is used oftenest. Spirit ground is more troublesome: always a source of anxiety owing to the uncertainty of its granulation under different conditions of weather and of temperature. Its

quality of tone, however, is much more refined and silvery than that of the more easily managed dust ground; and Short and Miss Pott have used it with extraordinary effect. In the "Span of Old Battersea Bridge" Sir Frank, indeed, has used the two in conjunction: the dust ground being employed for the dark, sodden timbers, and the more transparent spirit ground for the distance seen between them. On the same plate there are also *lines* of Aquatint and of Soft-ground Etching.

The older aquatints are generally rather hard-edged and flat in tone, unless combined with Mezzotint. Compare, in *Liber Studiorum*, "Bridge and Goats," which is simple aquatint, with the "Bridge in Middle Distance," and—shall we say?—some passages in a noble *Liber* piece which is Turner's work from end to end—much Mezzotint and little Aquatint—"Severn and Wye."

It may be fairly said that some of the Moderns have handled Aquatint in a more painter-like way than, generally, the earlier workers. Short has used aquatint lines on his supplemental *Liber* plate "Moonlight at Sea, off the Needles"; and I am reminded that in a pure Aquatint plate of an upright sea-piece by Turner, he has managed to make that method remarkably like Mezzotint in quality.

THE END

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